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THE

NATIONAL MUSIC OF IRELAND,

CONTAINING

THE HISTORY OF THE IRISH BARDS,

THE NATIONAL MELODIES,

The Harp,

AND OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF ERIN.

BY

MICHAEL CONRAN.

ORGANIST, ST. PATRICK'S CHURCH, MANCHESTER.

"Music! oh, how faint, how weak!—
Language fades before thy spell!
Why should feeling ever speak
When thou canst breath her soul so well?"
MOORE.

Second Edition.

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PREFACE.

THE matter contained in this Essay formed the subject of a course of lectures (with illustrations) on the "National Music of Ireland," which the writer had the pleasure to deliver, at the request of the Directors of the Manchester Mechanics' Institution. Acceding to the wishes of some friends, he has revised and enlarged the notes on this interesting subject, and has the pleasure to offer them in the present form, trusting that such an Essay on "the strains of other days" will not be quite unacceptable to the admirers of National Melodies.

The writer felt that some acquaintance with the principles of music was, perhaps of more importance than literary talent alone, in an Essay like the present; he, therefore, presumes upon the indulgence and sympathy of the musical amateur and the literary critic.

It need hardly be remarked that we owe much to the learning and antiquarian research of Walker —the zeal and musical knowledge of Mr. Bunting —and to others (from whose works the writer quotes), who have devoted their attention to the preservation of those interesting *reliques* of our native song—those

"Home
Heart-ballads of green Erin,"

whose expressive accents will ever be cherished by the people, and fill their minds with touching recollections.

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THE

NATIONAL MUSIC OF IRELAND.

CHAPTER I.

PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

In the absence of direct proof, and if even the light of the historic page were denied us, yet we could form, in most instances, a tolerably accurate idea of the mental intelligence attained by any people, by observing the degree of cultivation bestowed on science and on the finer arts; and the Poetry, National Music, Architecture, and Sculpture, would form so many monuments, which, to the practised ear and eye, express and trace, in impressive language, the general historic features of the people, and their acquaintance with the arts.

We also reasonably infer, that when one art or science is cultivated to a higher degree, its development has the effect of refining the taste generally; and prepares it, to some extent, for the more correct perception of the other sister arts.

In some instances, one art may be more cherished at

first than others, owing to peculiar causes ; but still the mind is thus prepared, to some extent, for appreciating the beauties of the others, which soon attain their position in that chain of science, which has been so bountifully given by Providence to man's research.

Music is intimately allied to the other sciences ; it teaches the properties and application of musical sounds, and their harmonic proportion, which is based on geometrical truth. The production of sound brings under our consideration the exercise of those beautiful mechanical principles in the form of our complicated musical instruments—the vibrating motion of the air, and the delicate and interesting study of acoustics, which teaches to proportion the vibrations into those magic combinations of harmonized sound, which, traversing the windings of the charmed ear, afford the highest degree of delight to the mind.

Music has, at all periods, and under almost every social condition, exercised its control over our mind, in exciting feelings of delight, awe, or sensations of a varied nature. From the most polished people down to the simplest children of nature, all own its soothing effects, or feel its influence ; and this supernatural influence seems to have been exercised even in the infancy of the musical art. We need hardly allude to the effects recorded of David's harp on the mind of Saul ; neither is it necessary to dwell on the powers ascribed in the poet's song to Orpheus, when as yet

"Music, heavenly maid, was young ;"

Suffice it to say that those breathings of the Lyre still

continue to hold our passions under their control; and those soothing accents excite our sympathetic nature, being a language which is felt by all, and particularly by us, as our more educated ear is trained to drink deeply of those gorgeous harmonies which are the result of the more developed state of musical science. The ear so cultivated, is, however, rendered more sensitive of the exquisite pathos of a national melody, in all its natural grace and original beauty; and its expressive sentiment at once reaches the heart. Music may, therefore, be arranged into two classes, the Natural and the Artificial—the melodies of the former species breathe a freshness of feeling which reminds us of the morning of life, "when hopes were bright." And the latter is the result of cultivated musical science, by which the "light of song is transmitted through the prismatic medium of rich and varied harmony."

Melody, air, or tune, may be defined as a series of single sounds (emitted in rhythm or time); and harmony, a series or progression of *several* simultaneous sounds, or melody multiplied.

Most countries may be said to possess a species of music peculiar to the people, and which is quite distinct in its *features*—so to speak—from that of other nations; it bears the impress of the habits, social character, and feeling or temperament of each people. Thus, the melodies of Switzerland give us an idea of the rural habits of that people, as those airs, being played on the pastoral reed, or on the resounding horn, are caught up by the echoes of the surrounding hills and valleys, so that those succeeding echoes form a species of natural har-

mony, the national airs being formed on what are termed harmonic intervals, or sounds which, if continued, would be in harmonic relation. This species of music gives us an idea of the pastoral character and habits of the people. Who has not heard of the effects of the "*Ranz des Vaches*" on the feelings of the exiled Swiss?

The national airs of France breathe a spirit of martial feeling, or give expression to chivalrous sentiment; and the effects of the "Marseillaise" hymn over the military temperament of that people, are associated with historic memorable events.

Who can describe the effects of national music on the feelings of the exiled patriot? or say, with what emotions he

> "Hears the wild strains" of his "dear native land?"—

the melody would seem to bring to his mind those forms of joyful light which gleamed around him in former happier days; but its sounds are hushed, and he awakes from the bright dream, only to feel more deeply the darker shades of the present. How often may the touching strains of the "Exile of Erin" have awakened such recollections! or as Byron beautifully describes the effects of

> "The home,
> Heart-ballads of green Erin, or grey Highlands,
> That bring Lochabar back to eyes that roam
> O'er far Atlantic continents or islands;
> The calentures of Music which o'ercome
> All mountaineers with dreams that they are nigh lands,
> No more to be beheld, but in such visions—"

I am not aware of any country possessing a richer treasure of national melody than Ireland; its "liquid sweetness" is almost boundless as the waters which bathe her shores. And having devoted some degree of attention to music, I may venture to say that most of those beautiful melodies breathe the "soul of feeling" and pathetic expression, and excite in the mind the most vivid emotions; and as they "move and stir the soul," they bring back to memory the

"Features that joy used to wear"

in days long past. And should the occasional accents of sadness give greater contrast, by their obtruding sombre tones, the voice of "eloquent music" lights up the mind with more exultant delight, and the heart, not unlike the beautiful poetic description of Erin's sun, smiles through its tears.

On this subject, I may be permitted to quote the apposite remarks from the elegant and poetic pen of Mr. Moore, who justly observes that "it has been often remarked, and still oftener felt, that in our music is found the truest of all comments upon our history. The tone of defiance, succeeded by the languor of despondency—a burst of turbulence dying away into softness—the sorrows of one moment lost in the levity of the next; and all that romantic mixture of mirth and sadness, which is naturally produced by the efforts of a lively temperament to shake off, or forget, the wrongs which lie upon it. Such are the features of our history and character, which we find strongly and faithfully reflected in our music; and there are even many

airs which it is difficult to listen to, without recalling some period or event to which their expression seems applicable."

Our music is one of those national monuments already alluded to, and which points out to us the degree of mental cultivation attained by those who have preceded us; and I am inclined to think that a study of its history cannot fail to be interesting to those who devote any consideration to the development of the human mind. To the musician it will be also of use, in showing him the progressing steps of his favourite science to its present gorgeous state.

The following remarks will not, it is hoped, be wholly useless, in assisting to arrive at an accurate idea of the history and progress of music in Ireland; in tracing the outlines of which, I have been not a little gratified, and I expect that those who may take the trouble of perusing this hasty sketch will not be less so.

CHAPTER II.

ORIENTAL DESCENT OF THE ANCIENT IRISH.

It is not, perhaps, the province of a musical essay, to enter into any learned antiquarian researches, as to early colonization of this country, by people of eastern descent: it is only necessary to refer to the concurring testimony of most of the ancient historians, whose statements are confirmed by the coinciding opinions of our most acute antiquarians of the present and past centuries—all pointing out the Celtic origin of the ancient Irish.

I may briefly remark, however, that the Phœnicians, at a very remote period, held trading intercourse with people on the coasts of the Mediterranean, as far as the Pillars of Hercules (the promontories at the Straits of Gibraltar). They also founded a colony at Gadir, or Gades (Cadiz,) whence these enterprising adventurers, coasting northwards, reached Ierne, where they established their habits, and their religious worship of the sun; and we find that the marvellous narratives of those ancient trading voyagers furnished Homer with subjects to embellish his episodes.

In the "Argonautics," a poem supposed to have been

written by Onornacritus, a cotemporary of Pisistratus, more than five hundred years before the Christian era—which gives a vague dream of the Atlantic, Ireland, under the Celtic name of Iernis, is glanced at without any allusion to our sister, the British Isle.

The knowledge of this island was communicated to the poet by the Phœnicians, it is supposed, as it appears that when Herodotus wrote, the Cassiterides, or British Isles, were not known in Greece.

Himlico, who made an expedition to Ireland previous to the reign of Alexander of Greece, describes the Œstrumnides, or Scilly Islands, as being two days' sail from the larger sacred island inhabited by the Hiberni: "Near the latter, the Island of Albiones, it is said, extends." The record, or journal of Himlico, was deposited by him in one of the temples of Carthage, and was, with other Punic records, seen by Festus Avienus, in the fourth century, B.C. Amongst other remarks as to the features of the country, he said that Ireland was, and had been from ancient times, designated "The Sacred Island."

Ptolemy, who wrote in the second century, (B.C.,) describes Ireland accurately in his geography, compiled chiefly from Phœnician authorities; and her promontories and cities are pointed out with the old Celtic names.

Diodorus Siculus speaks of Ireland as "Bea-epion, *i.e.* The Erin of the god Beal," as being about "the size of Sicily," and abounding in round temples, "wherein the priests or Druids sing to their harps the praises of Apollo." He also alludes to their skill in astronomy.

Plutarch also speaks of the intercourse between Ireland and Carthage.

Strabo describes the religious devotions of ancient Ireland, as similar to those of Samothrace, the favourite devotional retreat, in the Ægean sea, where those Cabiric mysteries were celebrated, from the earliest times, by the Phœnicians, to propitiate the deities supposed to preside over navigation. From the ancient geographer quoted by Strabo, we may infer that "the Sacred Island" had become another Samothrace of the west, where the mariner offered his orisons of thanksgiving for his safe arrival from the dangers of those seas beyond the Pillars.

To these testimonies we may add the traditions of Ireland herself—"pointing," as Mr. Moore justly remarks, "invariably in the same oriental direction—her monuments, the names of her promontories and hills, her old usages and rites, all bearing indelibly the same oriental stamp."*

But the science of ethnography removes all doubt on this subject: this linguistic system fixes the eastern origin of the ancient Irish, who are of the Indo-European family. The philological affinity between the Irish language and the Phœnician dialect is thus lucidly pointed out by that very eminent linguist, and distinguished prelate, the Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman, who says—"If we wish to establish the Irish language as a Phœnician dialect, the process is very simple. We know from the most undoubted sources, that the Phœnician and the Hebrew were two sister dialects:

* History of Ireland.

compare, therefore, the grammatical structure of this language and (the) Irish, and the result will solve the problem."*

This simple method of that learned philologist was suggested instead of Sir W. Betham's mode of showing the identity of the Irish and Phœnician languages.

To this oriental source we may reasonably ascribe whatever knowledge of the arts, or faint perception of the light of infantine science, may have existed at that antique period; whence, also, our first acquaintance with music may have proceeded; and the early use of the harp in Ireland, to accompany the pœans of the Druids, as mentioned by Diodorus, seems to confirm the idea, that poetry and music were wafted to us from the east. This we are also assured by our native bards and historians, as we shall see hereafter. In the meantime, a few remarks on the use of the harp by the Hebrews and the Egyptians, may afford additional light on this subject.

* Twelve Lectures on the connexion between Science and Revealed Religion, delivered in Rome by the Right Rev. Nicholas Wiseman, D.D.—London, 1842.

CHAPTER III.

MUSIC OF THE HEBREWS—THE HARP.

According to the Old Testament, we find that *stringed* and *wind* instruments were used by the antediluvians, to increase the effect of *vocal* music.

The first notice of music is, that "Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp and the organ."—Genesis iv. 21.

"There can be little doubt that the *hinnur* is the lyre or ancient harp, and the *hagub*, the ancient organ," or reeds of unequal lengths.

We are informed that about the period of the birth of Enos, (3664 B.C.) "men began to call on the name of the Lord,"* reciting the angelic hymn, "holy, holy, holy;" which hymnal invocation, the learned Padre Martini supposes to include poetry and music.

From the same antique and sacred record, we learn that after the deluge,† vocal and instrumental music was cultivated in Syria, as a part of the religious ceremonies.

* Gen. v. 26.

† Archbishop Ussher, dates A.M. 1656, B.C. 2348, A.M. 2265, B.C. 1739.

Laban reproaches Jacob (Genesis xxxi. 26,) with stealing away without making him aware of his intended departure, that he might have sent him "away with mirth and with songs, with tabret and with harp." Laban was an Assyrian. The passage of Daniel, (iii. 1–5,) affords evidence of the use of music amongst Chaldeans and Babylonians.

Music was greatly improved by David, we must infer, as he "and all the house of Israel played before the Lord, on all manner of instruments, made of fir wood: even on harps, psalteries, timbrels, cornets, and on cymbals." The number of those who were "cunning in song" was "two hundred, four score and eight," "David's songs were 1005!"

We are almost amazed at the importance of music in those early days. It is mentioned in Holy Writ, very frequently indeed!

MUSIC IN EGYPT

Is attributed to Hermes Thermégistus, (*i. e.* thrice illustrious) secretary to Osiris, who is, by some authors, considered identical with Noah, who died B.C. 1998; but tradition points to Ham, one of his sons, who led a colony into Egypt. Apollodorus, the "father of history," tells us that the Egyptians sung the song Linus, like that chaunted by the Phœnicians, and at the processions, the women carried the images, *singing* the praises of the gods, preceded by a *flute*.

It is not necessary to recount the finding of the tortoise shell, by Mercury, on the banks of the Nile;

which resounding shell suggested the first idea of the lyre.

Strabo tells us that the Egyptians were taught letters, the songs appointed by law, and certain species of music, established by government, exclusive of all others.

On this subject, the learned M. Bossuet (Bishop of Meaux) says, on the authority of Diodorus, that "dans la procession solemnelle des Egyptiéns, où l'on portait en cèrèmonie les livres de Trismègiste, on voit marcher á la tète de chantre tenant en main, *un symbole de la musique* (on ne sait pas ce que c'est) *et le livre des hymnes sacrees*."—(L'Histoire Univèrselle)—that they carried the "*symbol of music*" and the "*book of sacred hymns*" before the solemn procession.

Without pursuing these considerations further, I will briefly refer to the Theban monument, supposed to be the sepulchre of one of the first kings of that country. Mr. Bruce tell us that he saw on this monument a figure, in *fresco*, of a man playing on the harp—supposed to represent the Theban harp, about the time of Sosostris—(B.C. 1722)—and it is of beautiful workmanship, affording proof (continues Mr. Bruce) "stronger than a thousand Greek quotations, that geometry, drawing, mechanics, and music, were at the greatest perfection, when this harp was made," and "that what we think was the invention of the arts (in Egypt) was *only the beginning of the era of their restoration*."

From the royal sepulchres, west of Thebes, and the temple Tentyra, Mr. Denon has taken drawings, representing a group of three females, one playing on a theorbo, like a violin, tuned with pegs, and played with

the fingers; the second blows a wind instrument, and the third touches the harp: she is in a kneeling position, and striking the harp with both hands; it rises considerably above her head, and has from fifteen to twenty strings. Another harp, sketched, had the arch or back part, the form of a serpent, surmounted by a human head. Another represents a man playing on an instrument like a half moon, with nine strings from the two extremes of the crescent. An instrument resembling our guitar, was in the hands of one of those figures.

We are informed by Athenæus, that there was no people more skilled in music than the Alexandrians, (about the time of the 7th Ptolemy), for the "peasant labourer" was not only able to "play upon the lyre," but was also "perfect master of the flute." He also informs us, that at the Bacchic festival, given by Ptolemy Philadelphus, more than 600 musicians were employed in the chorus, and that *three* hundred of these were performers on the cithera.

GRECIAN MUSIC

And other sciences, were derived from Phœnicia, Egypt, and other nations of the East. Music and letters were brought from Phœnicia to Greece, by Cadmus, A.M. 2511, B.C. 1493.

The five principal *modes* in which Grecian song was composed—the Dorian, Lydian, Phrygian, Ionian, and the Æolian,—denote their derivation from countries in Asia. They had *three* species of scale, namely, the *octachord*, or diatonic scale, formed by two *tetrachords* (the dia-

tonic scale now used). The *enharmonic,* and the *chromatic* were less used, and which now form the *chromatic* or *semitonic* scale of modern music.*

From these remarks it will be observed that music was extensively studied, at a remote period, in the East; and as the linguistic science shows our early connexion with those nations, we may reasonably ascribe to that source our knowledge of song. We will now revert to the history of music in Ireland; and we shall find this view corroborated by the bards, and historic evidences, as we proceed.

* It has been reserved, however, for modern musicians to unbind the "hidden soul of harmony." We have no direct proof that the ancients practised harmonic combinations.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BARDS.

As music has, from the earliest period, formed a portion of the religious ceremonies of almost every nation, so we find it fulfilling important functions in the devotional system practised by the Druids in this country; and also in the administration of the laws, at that remote period when embryo states were as yet scarcely formed.

The cultivation of music being for many centuries in the hands of the bards, their history, which is, as Dr. Brown remarks, "perhaps of all others the most extraordinary," will also point out to us the gradual progress of this pleasing art. And as we look back "through the waves of time," the light of history burns less brightly, so that those efforts to trace the arts of music and poetry to their source, must necessarily lead us to that primitive era, when, as the learned Padre Martini observes, "man" was "both poet and musician by nature."

However, adopting those divisions in history proposed by Varro, and applied to Greece and other nations, I may also divide this little essay into three periods—the first, from the landing of Milesius in Ireland, B.C. 1000,

to the time of Ollamh Fodhla, B.C. 200, as being bardic, traditional, or legendary, and from that period to the time of St. Patrick, historical; and the *third* brings us to modern times.

In the first period, the events, or traditional lore of those remote times, would be moulded into a species of poetical rhapsody, and would flow down the smooth current of time by the "voice of song" of the bards; yet they may not be entirely overlooked by the historian, who, in the absence of scriptorial evidence, may find in those effusions the principal forms of the historic events.

The first notice we have of the bardic profession in Ireland is afforded by the people called the Tuatha-de-Danans, who preceded the Milesians. Philologists concur in the opinion that this name was applied to denote the *three* orders or classes into which that former people were divided—namely, *Tuatha*, a lord, priest—from *Dee*, God, as being devoted to the service of God; and Danans, poets or bards—from *Dan* a poem, or one who sung hymns in praise of the supreme power.

The next allusion to music wears more the semblance of truth.

On the arrival of Heber and Heremon, first princes of the Milesian race in Ireland (about 1000 years B.C.), Amergin, a third brother, was appointed arch-filea or chief bard,* and thus assumed the varied offices of

* There are still extant three poems attributed to this Bard, one of which is said to have been written while coasting on the shores of Ireland. This latter poem will be found, together with a brief outline of its meaning, in Hardiman's Irish Minstrelsy, vol. 2. "There

minister presiding over the respective departments of law, poetry, philosophy, and religion—like the similar custom of the early Greeks, by which Orpheus, Amphion, Linus, and Musæus, united the characters of poet, legislator, and philosopher. From this era we may probably date the establishment of the orders of Druids and Bards in this kingdom.* Ere which time man would probably have heard only the "Music of Nature" thus aptly described by Mason :—

"Mute till then was every plain,
Save where the flood, o'er mountain rude,
Tumbled his tide amain;
And echo, from the impending wood,
Resounded the hoarse strain:
While, from the north, the sullen gale,
With hollow whistlings, shook the vale;
Dismal notes—and answered soon
By savage howl the heaths among;
What time the wolf doth bay the trembling moon,
And thin the bleating throng."

The learned antiquary, Dr. Warton, is of opinion that

still remain," says the enthusiastic editor, "after a lapse of nearly three thousand years, fragments of these ancient bards, (Amergin and Lugad, the son of Ith,) some of which will be found included in the following pages, with proofs of their authenticity."—*Preface.*

The learned Editor of the Transactions of the Iberno-Celtic Society, gives the following account of the supposed poems of Amergin :— "These compositions are written in the Bearla Feini, and accompanied with an interlined gloss, without which they would be unintelligible to modern Irish scholars. The gloss itself requires much study to understand it perfectly, as the language is obsolete, and must in many places, be read from bottom to top."

* Vide Walker's Memoirs.

this bardic institution was introduced from the East—an opinion concurred in by Colonel Vallancy, who says that every thing we owe to the Milesians has an oriental origin ; they would reasonably preserve their habits and customs in their adopted land. Dr. O'Conor also coincides with this opinion.

The arts of poetry and music were not unknown to the Milesians, but would seem to have been practised before, as well as after their arrival in this kingdom, as we are informed by tradition, that Cir Mac Cis, a poet, and Onna Ceanfinn, a harper, accompanied them on their expedition—both being eminent in their respective arts, and were esteemed by the two princes, who each wished to have both these "children of song." So there was an amicable contest, as to which of them the tuneful artists should belong. The "blest pair of Sirens" were, however, separated by lot, and the poet fell to Heremon, in the northern, and the musician to Heber, in the southern portion of the kingdom ; hence, some acute writers infer, that the people of this southern "land of song," *par excellence*, are more sensible to the charms, and evince more skill in the practice of music. This may be hypercritical ; however, the elegant Dr. Warner thinks, that this circumstance of the contest between the two princes, might have tended to foster the laudable custom among the Irish, of treating their bards and literati with honour and liberality.

We are also informed, that the harp was, therefore, decreed by Heber to form the ensign or standard of Leinster.

A remarkable illustration of the respect paid to the bardic order, about that antique period, occurs in the reign of Achy (the immediate successor of Tighernmas). This prince, "not less glorious in arms, than wise in council," ordained a sumptuary law, called the Ilbreachta, regulating the dress of different grades of his people. By this law, the peasant and the lower grades were to have but one colour in their garments; so on, upwards, until we find the "principal nobility and knights" allowed to wear *five* colours—the *ollamhs*, or dignified *bards*, SIX, which was only one colour less than that worn by the royal family.*

Thus we find learning sharing the honours next to royalty; and high as the profession and honours of arms were held among the Irish, yet letters were more highly respected, and the ollamh took precedence. What will our polished nations say to this? We may reasonably hesitate, before pronouncing a nation barbarous, where learning was thus honoured next to royalty.

Our learned historian, and accomplished poet, Moore, alludes to these curious regulations, "as not only showing the high station allotted to learning and talent, but as presenting a coincidence rather remarkable with that custom of patriarchal times, which made a garment of many colours the appropriate dress of kings' daughters and princes."

* A garment of many colours was deemed a mark of distinction among the Jews. (Gen. xxxvii. 3.) Joseph had a garment of many colours.

The bards being introduced to our notice in a manner so honourable, a few remarks as to their mode of education, their offices, and privileges, may not be uninteresting.

Colleges or seminaries were instituted at a remote period in different parts of the kingdom—those quiet retreats of learning, remote from the "hum of men," were sunk in the bosom of woods, where the oak threw its sombre shades, excluding the "garnish eye of day." There, protected by state immunities, and not fearing the steps of the spoiler, the students enriched their minds with the learning of those days; nor were their contemplations diverted by external objects, or disturbed by the "voice of the charmer." All, in these "abodes of sacred quiet," was silent and impressive—the ruder passions were controlled—and the mind was trained to higher conceptions—there, "genius was fostered, and the soul sublimed."

In these institutions, the Druids instilled into the minds of the bards the rudiments of their laws, systems of physic, and history, through the medium of poetry, in which was wrapped all the knowledge of those ages; these poetical compositions embodying the principles of early science, were set to music, "which was always esteemed the most polite part of learning amongst them," as Keating informs us.

Agreeably to the custom or policy of that period, the Druids, like Pythagoras, impressed their dictates on the minds of the bardic students, *verbum verbo*, to be diffused orally; and the influence of poetry and music

would be calculated to impress these maxims more lastingly on the mind. They were, however, taught also the *Oghambeith*, or system of Punic letters, introduced by the Milesians.* The primitive Celtic term, *Ogam*, or *Ogham* signifies "the secrets of letters."

The bardic education occupied a course of about twelve years. During this course of arduous study, the young bard is represented as wandering occasionally through the groves, to relieve his mind, and essaying "the artless tale;" or, as with more contemplative musings, his ideas expand from the study of the great book of Nature, which presents such "food for thought,' and which charmed the senses. The elegant lines of Beattie are expressive of this picture:—

> "Whate'er of beautiful or new,
> Sublime or dreadful, in earth or sky,
> By chance, or search was offered to his view,
> He scann'd with curious and romantic eye."

Having ended his course of study, and being duly qualified, an honorary cap, called *Barred*,† and the degree of ollamh or doctor were conferred on the student who thus became inducted to fill the duties of his office. This profession of poetry and music was heredi-

* Cæsar, Pliny, and others, inform us, that the Druids were "learned in Theology, and other sciences." It was not deemed lawful amongst them to transmit their mysteries by writing, but that in all other affairs they used Greek letters.

† The celtic term *Bardd*, signifies a poet, according to Maitland.

tary ; the candidates were selected from certain families, distinguished by possessing a genius for those arts, not unlike the laws which made professions hereditary in Egypt in those days.

The use of arms was also practised, to develope the physical proportions of the body—an exercise so much recommended by Milton.

Having received the degree of ollamh, the bard became either a Filea,* a Brietheamh, or a Seanacha, the choice of which profession devolved on his family by hereditary right. These offices, which had been heretofore united in the same person, became disunited about this time, the duties being found too complex for one person.

Diodorus Siculus calls the bard a composer of canticles; and Strabo styles them poets or prophets; Pomponius Festus says that the bard is a singer, who celebrated, in verse, the praises and exploits of great men. O'Flaherty and other ancient authors tell us, that the bards were both poets, and philosophers, and masters of the arts and sciences. They described, like the Arabs and ancient Greeks, philosophy, the laws and history in verse; being a style more concise, and more easily retained.

* The Celtic term *Filea*, means a philosopher; such was the high estimation in which the bards were held by the Milesians.

THREE ORDERS OF BARDS.

1. The *Oblamh-Re-Dan*, or Filidhe, were poets, as the term implies. They versified the maxims of religion, recited the "*Rosga Catha*," or martial odes, to inspire a sentiment of military ardour, by the war-song, or celebrated the valorous deeds of the chieftains and princes; and at the "Feast of the Hill," they amused with the "lays of other days," modulating their voice to the "sweet sounds" of the harp, an instrument which every member of the Bardic order "could touch with a master hand." The Filidhe *performed other offices;* they were heralds and constant attendants on the chiefs in the battle-field, and were seen marching at the head of their armies, arrayed with white flowing robes, harps glittering in their hands, and their persons surrounded by the Oirfidigh, or instrumental musicians. Their persons being held sacred, they stood and watched the deeds of valour, of which to form subjects for their lays, thus noticed by Pindar—

> "The muse her piercing glances throws around,
> And quick discovers every worthy deed."

We are informed by the learned Dr. O'Conor that many of our ancient Druids and bards affected the gifts of prophecy. The enthusiastic poetical effusions of the Filidhe would not be unfavourable to such a popular impression; and this class of bards, by painting, in glowing colours, the victorious chaplet, excited a spirit of emulation which would be predictive of success. Mason has

given a graphic picture of the bard in the moment of inspiration—

> " He is entranced. The fillet bursts that bound
> His liberal locks—his snowy vestments fall
> In ampler folds; and all his floating form
> Doth seem to glisten with divinity."*

2. The *Breitheamhain*, (Brehons) or legislative bards, promulgated the laws in a species of recitative or monotonous chant, seated on an eminence in the open air—they accompanied their voices on those occasions by the sustained sounds of the harp, like the orators of Greece and Rome. Philologists inform us that the same Greek term means a song and a law.

3. The *Seanachaidhe* were antiquaries, historians, and genealogists—each province, prince, and chief, had a *Seanacha;* and the learned Walker conjectures that there was a provincial repository for those antiquaries to place their collections in the care of the *Ollamh re Seanacha*. The ancient college of arms of Ulster affords an example of this institute.

With the above three orders of bards may be noticed one called the *Oirfidigh*, a class of performers on the different instruments; and they took their several names from the instruments they professedly played.

The *Ollam-re-ceol* (or Mus. Doc.) was the head or director of this order.

As to the dress of the bard, it cannot be now accurately described; but as they in most instances belonged to the order of the *noblesse*, their dress would be of suitable richness—assuming, as we have seen, nearly all the

* Caractacus.

colours which were worn by the royal family—these colours were in stripes, or wrought in the texture of the mantle, denoting the rank of the wearer, like the custom of the primitive Eastern nations. The ode, entitled the "Order of St. Patrick," published 1783, presents the picture of Hibernia's guardian genius, dressed, in consonance with this idea, with

> " Her mantle of green *inwrought with* gold,
> As worn by kings and bards of old."

THE CAOINE

Was a solemn and affecting ceremony, during which the different orders of the bards performed the funeral chant, or recited the "*Oraison funèbré*" over the remains of departed greatness.

From the importance attached to these sad obsequies in former times, a brief notice of them may not be uninteresting.

On the death of a prince or chief, the " stones of his fame" were raised amidst the voices of bards. The rites prescribed by religion having been performed by the Druids, the genealogy or pedigree of the deceased was recited aloud by his Seanacha—the Caoine or funeral song (composed by the Filea, and "set to music" by one of the Oirfidigh of the departed), was sung in recitative over the grave by a Racaraide or Rhapsodist, who "occasionally sustained his voice with arpeggios swept over the strings of his harp"—a species of antiphonal chorus was chanted by the attendant minstrels, joined by the relatives and friends of the deceased, who, mingling sighs

and tears with the wailings of the harp, produced penetrating effects on the feelings.

We find that Hector was lamented in similar sad and "pious orgies"—

> " A melancholy choir attend around,
> With plaintive sighs, and music's solemn sound;
> Alternately they sing, alternate flow
> T' obedient tears, melodious in their woe."

These solemn and affecting scenes were calculated to soften the mind as the tear of sympathetic sorrow flowed; and those moments were seized on by the bards, whose strains in plaintive cadence soothed the passions, and prepared the mind of their auditors to revere and imitate whatever was deemed virtuous in those days, ere the light of truth had extended its mild ray over the earth.

Other instances of these sad ceremonies might be quoted from the Greek poet. However, I shall merely allude to a similar melancholy scene where Brisëis (in the tent of Achilles) mourns over the dead body of Patrocles—

> " With tears she said,
> Ah, my Patrocles! dearest friend of all
> To hapless me; departing from this tent
> I left thee living, and now, generous chief,
> Restored to it again, here find thee dead!
> . . . . . .
> She spake, and all the fellow-captives heav'd
> Responsive sighs."

This ceremony might be traced to the remotest antiquity in most countries, did our purpose require it.

However, some brief allusion may be made to David's lament for Jonathan, and to the Phœnician custom described by Virgil, who was so correct as to costume and character, and who thus speaks of the *conclamatio* over the Phœnician Dido, which so much resembles the *caoine*—

> "Lamentis gemituque et fœmineo ululatu,
> Tecta fremunt——"

And, agreeably to the opinion of Dr. Campbell, the very words "*ululate*" or "*hullaloo,*" "and the Greek word of the same import, have all a strong affinity to each other." This ceremony was considered of such importance, that the man to whom it was denied "was deemed accursed," and his ghost was supposed to wander through "earth and air," bewailing his unhappy fate; and imagination heard the cries of these shadowy beings in the shrieking winds or foaming cataract. Such apprehensions, as an elegant critic observes, served to

> "Deepen the murmur of the falling floods,
> And breathe a browner horror on the woods."

As society advanced, the funeral ceremony became so costly, that the expenses attending it were ordained by the Brehon laws.

An extract from the song of the bards over Cuchullin's tomb, as translated by Macpherson,* will afford an idea of the *caoine* in Ireland:—

"By the dark rolling waves of Lego, they raised the

* Ossian.

hero's tomb—Luath at a distance lies; the companion of Cuchullin in the chase. Blest be thy soul, son of Lerno: thou wert mighty in battle. Thy strength was like that of a stream; thy speed like the eagle's wing. Thy path in battle was terrible; the steps of death were behind thy sword. Blest be thy soul, son of Lerno; carborne chief of Dunscaik!"

We find that the sweet and penetrating tones of the female voice were used to add to the solemn effect of these ceremonies, for which purpose women were "instructed in music," and in the *cursios*, or elegiac measure. This custom was similar to that of the Hebrews, from whom it was most likely derived. On the abolition of the bardic order, in latter days, the sad office devolved on this class of female mourners, similar to the "*mulieres præficæ*," mentioned by Servius; "and this female chorus," says the venerable O'Conor, "is continued to this day at our funerals in Ireland, and in the Highlands of Scotland;" but so remote from the original institution, "that no passion is excited" by those unequal tones and extemporaneous compositions.

Spenser makes extended remarks on the *caoine*, as he heard it in the sixteenth century, when the bardic order was proscribed by penal acts; and at present (1845,) it is almost fallen into disuse.*

Although women held no rank in the bardic order during the heroic ages, yet they cultivated the "sweet science" of music as well as poetry—which, when united

* The MOATS or *Tumuli*, so numerous in Ireland, were sepulchres until the reign of Eocha X. B.C.

to the charms of female beauty, have so much sway over the heart; hence we find them in secret directing the "helm of the state," and the primary causes of great events. And these *cruiteoga*, or female harpists, with portable harps in their hands, (like those carried by the Hebrew women before the ark,) might be also seen, (when the armies returned victorious,) advancing in troops, clad in white garments, with joyful step, and congratulatory songs, to greet the heroes. Thus, "with the voice of songs, and the harp, they will hail their heroes."

The Celtic nations practised this custom during the infancy of society, as an incentive to valour.

CHAPTER V.

OLLAMH FODHLA, B.C. 200.

At that remote period of Irish history, when the numerous kings pass, like shadows, before us, the royal sage, Ollamh Fodhla stands pre-eminently distinguished, by the strong light which history and tradition have thrown around him.

Historians are not quite decided as to the precise period when this celebrated personage ascended the throne. However, Mr. Moore informs us that this great legislator may not be removed to a date more remote than the second century before the Christian era, although other historians ascribe to this Irish Lycurgus greater antiquity.

This monarch, the "*Ollamh,*" or "doctor," *par excellence* of ancient Ireland, was brave, wise, and learned. Peace, the nurse of science, was his delight; although ready to wield the sword, whenever the safety of his people required it. His reign forms an important era in the history of Ireland. Amongst other most useful institutions, he established the *Teamorian Fes,* which were *Triennial Conventions of the three* principal orders of which the state consisted; namely, the

monarch, the Druids, or ollamhs, and the plebeians. These national assemblies were convened at the above-stated periods, for the purpose of promulgating salutary laws for the public good; and in the presence of these assemblies, the records of the kingdom were examined: "and whatever materials for national history, the provincial annals supplied, were here sifted and epitomised, and the result entered in the great national register, called the Psalter of Tara."*

As the bards occupied so distinguished a position in these national councils, a brief outline of the proceedings may not be uninteresting.

Three days before the feast of Samhuin, or vernal equinox, (1st of November,) this convention assembled at the palace of Teamor, or Tara. The monarch, on an elevated seat, facing the west, was surrounded by the kings of Leinster, Munster, Ulster, and Connaught. As first of the next order in the state, sat the Druids, or ollamhs, and the filidhe (the rank of Christian bishops in later times). Behind these, the hereditary marshal, the seanachaide, the *oirfidigh*, the standard-bearer, and other state-officers took their places. Then appeared the principal nobility, headed by the knights; and after these came the beatachs, or representatives of cities.

* Moore.—In like manner the historian Ctesias says, that the Persians were obliged by law to write their annals in the Royal Archives. This practice of chronicling events, so generally adopted in Ireland, and even by particular chieftains, who each retained a seanachie or historian, served to keep alive a spirit which was continued in the Christian era, by the successive monastic annalists; hence the various volumes of Psalters or Annals "with which the ancient literature of Ireland abounds."

The Ard-filidhe announced the opening of the assembly, by reciting sacred odes, "with symphonic accompaniments," by the oirfidigh. The Druids then performing their mysteries, the great fire of Samhuin, or Samhin, was lighted, and the deities were solemnly evoked to direct the national councils. *Three* days were then given to festivities, when the business of the state commenced.*

The Seanachaidhe submitted their records to a committee of literati, who carefully examined them, expunging whatever was deemed apocryphal. After this ordeal, they were sanctioned by the assembly, and ordered to be versified, and inserted in the National Register, or Psalter of Tara.

Any deviation from truth in those records was visited with disgrace.

Bishop Nicholson calls these poems of our ancient bards, the "chief pillars" on which our "history is founded;" and Dean Swift, writing to the Earl of Oxford on this subject, says, that "there was more effectual care taken by our ancestors to preserve the memory of times and persons, than we find in this age of learning and politeness, as we are pleased to call it."

The bardic order being under his peculiar guidance, this sagacious monarch ordained that none but young

* The air *Baal-tigh-abhoran*, or as usually called Baltiorum, refers to this antique practice; and as the Pagan festivals were turned to the use of the Christian worship, the *Baal-tinne* or fire lighted to welcome the Samhuin, or Summer solstice, was afterwards continued to commemorate the festival of St. John's eve, on which occasion the melody may be still heard from the groups assembled around those bonfires.

men of acknowledged genius, and of noble descent, should be admitted into this favoured order. This profession was hereditary,* (the same, as Herodotus informs us, was the law amongst the Egyptians regarding professions,) and at the death of a bard, his estates devolved on the next member of his family who was most distinguished for talents in poetry and music. This great legislator also ordained that each Ardfilea might retain *thirty* attendant bards; and a bard of the second class might be allowed a retinue of *fifteen;* the person of each individual of the bardic order was deemed sacred and inviolable, and their estates unalienable; and during civil dissensions, their houses and flocks were free from depredation. Finally, that the ollamhs, in the different sciences, should not exceed two hundred in number. Thus, these cultivators of the arts were not dependent on the state—and the order opened a path to dignity and fame.

He also founded a university at Teamor, called *Mur-ollamhan,* or "college of the learned," in which the youth of the nation were educated under the care of the Filidhe. And the learned antiquarian, Walker, says, that "here they were taught the powers of verse and song, by being initiated into the mysteries of metrical cadence, vocal harmony, and graceful action;" attainments which were deemed indispensable to the young princes, to candidates for the magistracy, and to the

* The early adoption of this Eastern practice, shews how much the Irish adhere to ancient usages; thus proving themselves in so far "worthy" of their oriental descent—which involves, however, the inheritance of the same stationary principle.

ollavain. Graduated bards of this college, had precedence of rank through the kingdom.*

In the reign of Achy the Third, some of the ollamhs—forgetting the high duties imposed on them in their judicial capacity as *brehons*, or legislative bards—interfered with the rights of private property, which aroused the popular feeling against them. Their banishment was demanded—but the bards retired, some to Scotland, and others were received at the palace of the accomplished and learned Concobhar Mac Nessa, King of Munster. This royal patron of the learned generally, and the especial protector of the bards, interposed his influence, and reconciled the people—and the "sons of song" were again restored to favour—this prudent monarch seeing the impolicy of expelling from the kingdom so large a body of eminent persons, who might be looked upon as the depositories of the learning of that period; namely, that immediately preceding the Christian era.

This accomplished king invited to his palace of Eamania, "the seat of fine arts," *three* of the most eminent ollamhs,† where they reduced the laws to axioms, and which were thought to be so justly conceived, as to merit the appellation of "*breathe neimidh*," or celestial judgments. These laws were committed to the *Taibhle Fidea*, or wood tables of the learned; and "for many ages," Dr. Werner remarks, "no nation was happier in the compiling or execution of laws, than

* In this college were also taught "philosophy, astronomy, poetry, medicine, history," and other arts.—ABBE MACGEOGHEGAN.

† Forchern, one of the above, wrote the curious work called the "*Uraiceacht na Neigeas*," or "Primer of the Bards."

this. The "judicia cœlestia" may be like those axioms of the sages of Greece, which were called the "Dicta Sapientium." (A.D. 70.)

The learned Dr. O'Conor informs us, that at this meeting of the bards, at the Palace of Eamania, the *seven* Filean gradations, or classes, were instituted. The ollamh, or chief doctor, of these "seven degrees in all the sciences," was to be skilled in the four principal branches of poetry, and to study each of them for four years. His reward, for entertaining an assembly, was twenty milch cows, and to be attended on all occasions, by twenty-four men, to protect him, if required; and he, with his attendants, were to be supplied with necessaries for a month. This was reasonable inducement for study in those days.

Each prince chose an ollamh for his companion and instructor.

Various are the romantic and interesting incidents related of the bards—some of which might serve to illustrate the strong affection for their patron, their entire devotion to him, quite regardless of their lives if his interests should so require such a sacrifice, and in some instances they evince the greatest sublimity of soul.

An instance of the power exercised by the eloquent language of poetry and music, aided by the charm of beauty, is recorded by historians; and which, by way of episode, I may briefly quote.

Cobthaigh having unjustly seized and usurped the throne of Ireland, Maon, the youthful and rightful heir to which, having fled to the court of the king of South

Munster, he became enamoured of the beauteous Moriat, daughter of the king. His friends, anxious for his safety, induced him to retire to France, where he was received honourably by the reigning monarch, and distinguished himself by "deeds of arms." His fame reaching the ear of Moriat, awakened the tender feeling, and love made her a poetess—she wrote an ode extolling the exploits of Maon, and exhorting him to an effort for the throne of his ancestors. This ode was sent in care of Craftine, a celebrated harper, to the French court, where the attention of the prince was soon attracted by the "melodious numbers" of the bard. The prince eagerly inquired the author of the subject, and being soon informed, he, in turn, felt the power of love; and obtaining aid from the French monarch, he returned to Ireland, and wrested the usurped sceptre from the hand of Cobthaigh. And Maon adorned the throne by the presence of the lovely Moriat.*

Many of these subjects might form the groundwork for the dramatic muse, or might serve as the leading features of other literary productions.

Cormac Ulfadha, the most accomplished of all the Milesian princes, ascended the throne A.D. 254. All is historians agree that this monarch was distinguished as a legislator, soldier, and scholar; and that, from his munificence and desire for learning, he founded *three* academies at Tara. "In the first was taught the science of war; in the second, historical literature; while the

* Warner and others.

third academy was devoted to the cultivation of civil jurisprudence."

The monarch Cormac was a distinguished ornament of that learned order, the historical and literary bards. And we find that particular care is devoted to sustain the influence of the Fileas and the Seanachies, by whom the history was regularly preserved, and the laws purified and administered.

The domestic regulations of Cormac, who lived in oriental splendour, were deemed so excellent, as to be adopted by his successors.

His companion was a prince; his adviser a Brehon; the Druid, the chief physician, the Ollamh-re-Seanacha, the Ard-Filea, all performed their respective offices; and, seventhly, the Ollamh-re-Ceol, or music director, with his *corps de musique*, exercised their art to calm the mind, and to solace the monarch in his hours of relaxation.

We are told that at this period, such was the desire for music, that it formed a necessary part of education, as in earlier times every one was desirous of being practised in vocal or instrumental music.

The following translation of an Irish poem, which affords us an illustration of the regal court of this and succeeding times, may not be uninteresting. We are informed that the phraseology of it clearly shows its antiquity, and that it has particular reference to the days of Cormac O'Connor Ulfadha :—

"Ten royal officers for use and state,
Attend the court, and on the monarch wait;

A *nobleman*, whose virtuous actions grace
His blood, and add new glories to his race;
A *judge*, to fix the meaning of the laws,
To save the poor, and right the injured cause;
A grave *physician*, by his skilful care
To ease the sick, and weaken'd health repair;
A *poet*, to applaud or boldly blame,
And justly give, or infamy or fame;
For without him, the freshest laurels fade,
And vice to dark oblivion is betrayed.
The next attendant was an holy *priest*—
Prophetic fury roll'd within his breast;
Full of his God, he tells the distant doom
Of kings unborn, and nations yet to come;
Daily he worships at the sacred shrine,
And pacifies the gods with rites divine;
With constant care, the sacrifice renews,
And anxiously the panting entrails views.
To touch the harp, the skill'd *musician* bends,
And o'er the strings his nimble hand extends;
The sweetest sounds flow from each trembling string,
Soft as the breezes of the breathing spring.
'Tis music's lot the passions to control,
And tune the harsh discordance of the soul.
The *antiquary*, by his skill reveals
The race of kings, and all their offspring tells;
The spreading branches of the royal line,
Traced out by him, in lasting records shine.
Three officers in lower order stand,
Who, when he dines, attend the king's command."

Cormac having lost an eye in resisting a rebellious attack, resigned the sceptre to his son, Carbre, as, agreeably to the laws, no monarch with either mental or physical defect could accept the throne; a law which bears a remarkable coincidence with the rules and customs of eastern nations.* Cormac retired from the

* Persian History.—Moore, vol. 1.

summit of human greatness to a rural retreat, where he produced, among other compositions, the "Advice to a King," which is replete with the learning of that period, and is said to have been extant so late as the seventeenth century.

The "brightest ornament of Cormac's court" was Finn Mac Cumhal, or, as known to modern ears, Fingal, the son-in-law to Cormac, and general of the famed Fianna Eirinn, or Irish Militia. Our learned historian, Mr. Moore, says, that "it has been the fate of this popular Irish hero, after a long course of traditional renown in his own country, where his name still lives, not only in legends and songs, but in the yet more indelible record of scenery connected with his memory, to have been, all at once, transferred, by adoption, to another country, and start under a new but false shape, in a fresh career of fame. Besides being himself an illustrious warrior bard, this chief transmitted also to his descendants, Oisin and Osgar, the gift of heroism and song." This hero died by the lance of an assassin in the year 273.*

* At Rathbrea, (near Duleek, on the banks of the Boyne,) the name Rathbrea was changed to that of "Cill-Fhin," Killeen, the burial-place of Fin.

Historians clearly show, however, that the translator of those supposed Ossianic poems is in error in his hypothesis, his only shadow of foundation might, perhaps, be found in the circumstance, that Cormac and Finn, at the head of the Fian or Militia, established a colony of Scots (a name which the Irish bore) in North Britain, governed by Carbry Riada; this colony was defended and watched over by Cormac; hence those Irish poems of the middle ages have been turned to account by Macpherson, altering the scene of action of these pieces, as well as the names and dates.

Finn was eminent in poetry and music—arts in which none of Fian were permitted to be unskilled.

The venerable bard, Oisin, thus extols the powers of his father, in a poetical dialogue with St. Patrick—(which is ascribed to a bard of the middle ages). "When Finn sat upon a hill, and sang a tune to our heroes, which would enchant the multitude; * * O! how much sweeter was it to thy hymns?"

We are told that a contention having arisen between Goll and Finn Mac Cumhal, on a question of precedence, near the palace of the latter, at Almhaim,* it could only be reconciled by the intervention of the bards, who, shaking the "chain of silence" between the chiefs, flung themselves between the ranks, extolling the sweets of peace; the warriors, laying down their arms, listened with attention to the harmonious lays of the bards, whom they afterwards rewarded with precious gifts. This is an "extraordinary instance" of the powers of the Irish bards in those days. Diodorus tells us that the bards exercised similar influence over the armies in Gaul.

The undue pretensions of the Fians aroused the royal wrath, and they were opposed by the monarch at the battle of Gabhra where all the Fians fell, Oisin or Ossian excepted, A.D. 296. The monarch also did not survive it.

Oisin, or "warrior bard," was one of the most eminent poets of his time; and although many fugitive pieces of Irish poetry have been attributed to him, but

* Situated in Leinster, on the summit of Allen, or pronounced Allowin.

few fragments of his poems have reached our time; and even had his works been preserved in their original text, few of our modern Irish linguists would be found able to read them. It is now *an ascertained fact*, admitted, that those poems of Ossian, translated by Macpherson, are the effusions of bards of the mediæval times.

Agreeably to Playfair's "Chronology," this "Son of Song" flourished about A.D. 300, and we may well suppose our venerable bard descending the vale of life, until "the mist of years closed upon his light."

Ossian is represented as lamenting the loss of his sight, in the following beautiful apostrophe to the sun:—

"O thou, that rollest above, round as the shield of my fathers! whence are thy beams, O sun! thy everlasting light? Thou comest forth in thy awful beauty, and the stars hide themselves in the sky: the moon, cold and pale, sinks in the western wave: but thou, thyself, movest alone; who can be a companion of thy course? The oaks of the mountains fall; the mountains themselves decay with years; the ocean shrinks and grows again; the moon, herself, is lost in Heaven; but thou art for ever the same, rejoicing in the brightness of thy course. When the world is dark with tempests; when thunder rolls, and lightning flies, thou lookest in thy beauty from the clouds, and laughest at the storm. But to Ossian, thou lookest in vain; for he beholds thy beams no more; whether thy yellow hairs flow on the eastern clouds, or thou tremblest at the gates of the west. But thou art, perhaps, like me, for

a season, and thy years will have an end. Thou shalt sleep in thy clouds, careless of the voice of the morning. Exult, then, O Sun, in the strength of thy youth. Age is dark and unlovely; it is like the glimmering of the moon, when it shines through broken clouds, and the mist is on the hills; the blast of the north is on the plain, the traveller shrinks in the midst of his journey."*

Finn's chief bard, or Ollamh-re-Dan, was the great Finnian commander's son, Fergus *Fibheoil* (of the sweet lips), in allusion to this poet's melodious numbers. Succeeding poets have bestowed on him as many eulogistic epithets as perhaps the Grecian bard has applied to Jupiter. His rank and persuasive eloquence gave him great sway over his auditors; and especially in the battle-field these proved of real utility.

The heroic poems, called the *Cath-Fin-tragha*, or the battle of Fintry, the admired *Dargo*, and the *Cath-Gabhra*, the battle of Gabhra, already mentioned, are interesting specimens of his poetry.† The learned linguist, Mr. T. O'Flanagan, says, that the diction of those antique poems, is "pure, nervous, and persua-

* Köhl, 1843, says, that he heard many of these Ossianic fragments recited by the peasantry near Drogheda, by whom these poems are traditionally preserved. The same traveller remarks, that "doubtless, the shrewder and more active Scotch have decorated their traditions with many borrowed plumes from the Emerald Isle;" and he says, "Macpherson was not the *only*, although the *luckiest* and the *cleverest* falsifier of Ancient Irish Minstrelsy."

† The bard's person being inviolable, he would have escaped in that fearful battle which he describes in Epic song.

sive;" to each of which is prefixed the name of the poet Fergus, son of Finn.

Some idea may be formed of the number of the bards at this period, from there having been "a band of music," and a number of filidhe attendant on each *cath* of the Finnian troops, as we are informed by historians.

"Ireland," observes Mr. Holmes, "was famous from an early period, for cultivating the kindred arts of poetry and music. Fragments of the poetry of Lugad, the son of Ith, are said to remain, after a lapse of 3000 years; and we find the names of several bards and musicians, who flourished before the Christian era, in the chronicles of the country." Vocal music was cultivated in preference to that of instruments.

"The people of Ireland," says Amergin MacAmalgaid, in the *Dinn Seanchus*, or History of Memorable Places in Ireland, written in A.D. 544, "deemed each other's voices sweeter than the warblings of the melodious harp—such peace and concord reigned amongst them, that no music could delight them more than the sound of each other's voice."

"*Temur*, or Tara," Mr. Holmes further remarks, "was so called, for its celebrity for melody above the palaces of the world: *Tea* or *Te* signifying melody or music, and *mur*, a wall. *Temur*, the wall of music."* But, perhaps, more correctly derived from *Tea-mur*,

* "Progress of music in Ireland," ascribed to Mr. Holmes;"—New Library of Useful Knowledge, 1845.

Tea's tomb (wife to Heremon,)—hence Temor or Tara.*

Having brought this sketch so far, we shall proceed, with more interest, to observe the effect which the benign light of Christian revelation has produced in the formation of our national music; the development of which I shall endeavour to trace out in the succeeding pages.

* Annals, 4 Mag. i.

CHAPTER VI.

MUSIC OF IRELAND AFTER THE INTRODUCTION OF CHRISTIANITY.

As the darker shadows of the moon recede before the glowing radiance of the rising sun, so the sombre mysteries of the Druids fade before the radiant light of the Christian faith—its benign rays illumine the entire land—and a moral revolution is achieved with the mild eloquence of truth.

As Apostle of Ireland, St. Patrick arrived in the year 432 after Christ, during the reign of the monarch Laoghaire; and in a few years, without a single drop of blood being shed on account of religion, all Ireland was brought tranquilly under the dominion of the Gospel.

This event changed the habits of the people. The proud Druid lays aside the mystic rites, and adopts the great Divine truths. But the order of the bards underwent no change, but continued the same for many succeeding centuries; except that, instead of singing pœans to false deities, their harps were attuned to the praises of the *Most High*. And what Jocelyn says of the eminent bard and Ard-filea, to the monarch Laoghaire, will be applicable to the entire bardic order; that Dub-

tach MacLughaire being converted to Christianity, "turned his poetry, which, in his youth, he had employed in the praise of false gods to a better use—now changing his opinion and language, composed more elegant poems to the honour of the Omnipotent God."*

Feich, or Fiach, a contemporary bard, and a disciple of Dubtach, being admitted to holy orders by St. Patrick, was appointed bishop to preside over the church at Slattery. This prelate was distinguished for piety and learning. He wrote a hymn in praise of his patron, St. Patrick, in the Irish language, which has been published, with a translation into Latin by Colgan.† This antique poem is supposed, by some historians, to be of somewhat later date.

From an ancient manuscript, called "The Romance of Cearbhall," we quote the following translated passage:—"And at that time Cearbhall was playing on his harp to Almighty Aosar (God), after his first sleep."‡

The following quotation from the elegant Blair, may

* "Carmina quæ quondam peregit in laudem falsorum deorum jam in usum meliorem mutans et linguam, poemata clariora composuit in laudem Omnipotentïs."—JOCELYN.

Some of this poet's productions are to be found amongst the Irish collections. An elegant hymn of his, (says Mr. O'Reilly,) addressed to the *Almighty*, is preserved in the Felire Aenguis, or account of the Church festivals, written by Angus Ceile-de, in the eighth century. There is also in the Book of Rights, a poem attributed to him, in which he thus asserts the supremacy of his art. There is no right of visitation or headship (superiority) over the truly learned poet.—*Trans. Iberno-Celt. Society.*

† Col. Vallancy's collection.

‡ The harp solaced the hours of the Greek, as well as the Irish

show how carefully the bardic order was preserved in that great revolution of religion; nor need we be surprised at this, when we consider the great influence which the poetry of music possesses over the feelings; and that its powers would be devoted to the service of religion not less than to secular or social purposes:—

"So strong was the attachment of the Celtic nations to their poetry and bards, that amidst all the changes of their government and manners, even long after the Druids were extinct, and the national religion altered, the bards continued to flourish—not as a set of strolling songsters, like the Greek Ἀοιδοὶ or Rhapsodists in Homer's time, but as an order of men highly respected in the state, and supported by a public establishment. We find them, according to the testimonies of Strabo and Diodorus, before the age of Augustus Cæsar; and we find them remaining under the same name, and exercising the same functions as of old, in Ireland, and in the north of Scotland, almost down to our own times."*

It may be observed, from what has been said, that many of the bards, after the introduction of Christianity, acted in the double capacity of bards and clerical dispensers of religion. Even so late as the 13th century,

heroes. The delegates from Agamemnon to Achilles found the latter playing on that instrument, as thus described by Pope:—

"Amus'd at ease the godlike man they found,
Pleased with the solemn Harp's harmonious sound:
With this he soothes his angry soul, and sings
The immortal deeds of heroes and of kings."

* Discussion on the poems of Ossian.

we find that Donchad O'Daly, abbot of Boyle, "excelled all his contemporary bards in the hymnal species of poetry." Hence they were often called Chlère, probably from the Latin term *Clericus;* and it will be seen, as we progress, to what extent music was cultivated by our early ecclesiastics, and to what extent their study of it tended to form a national taste for "sweet song."

By the advice of the two celebrated bards, Dubtach and Rosa, St. Patrick (having established the Christian worship) undertook the revision of the Irish annals. Leogaire, the monarch, convened a committee for that purpose, consisting of *three* kings, three prelates, and *three* seanachaidhe. The kings were Leogaire himself, with the kings of Munster and Ulster; the prelates, St. Patrick, the pious Binen, and the judicious Cairnach; and the bards, Dubtach, Fergus, and Rosa. The national records being examined by this assembly, they were transcribed into the *Seanachas More,* or great book of antiquity; and other copies of this venerable record were deposited in the care of the bishops of the principal churches for the benefit of posterity.*

The wisdom of our apostle was also exercised in revising the *Breathe Nimhe,* which were probably written in prose about that period. In some of those laws, which had been previously confirmed by Mogha Nuad-

* The saint, in the excess of his zeal, committed some hundreds of volumes to the flames, relating to the affairs of the Druids and other general matters.

had (A.D. 192), we find the following curious articles respecting bards:—

> "The lawful value of a silver bodkin to a king,
> Or professor (as bard or ollamh), is thirty heifers.
> The lawful price of the clothing of an ollamh,
> Or poet laureate, is *five* milch cows."

The bards continued to exercise such important offices in the state, that they were often claimed as hostages. "Invested with honours, wealth, and power," says the learned Walker—"endowed with extraordinary privileges, which no other subject presumed to claim—possessed of an art which by soothing the mind gains ascendancy over it—respected by the great for their learning and reverenced almost to adoration by the vulgar for their knowledge of the secret composition, and the hidden harmony of the universe—they became so arrogant as to demand the golden buckle and pin which were worn by the monarch Hugh, and his ancestors in royalty. This arrogance, and their increased numbers, which at this period being about "one-third of the men of Ireland!" led the monarch to contemplate the abolition of the order. For this purpose he convened an assembly of the states at Drom-Chille, county of Donegal, A.D. 580; but at the intercession of the venerable St. Columba (who was invited from Iona) the bardic order was spared—their numbers were, however, considerably reduced, the monarch allowing "only to each provincial prince, and to each lord of a cantred, one registered ollamh," who was sworn to employ his

talents only for the honour of the Deity, for his country, and other specified purposes. It was also ordained that their respective patrons should settle a competent hereditary revenue on these ollamhs.*

By the advice of the revered saint (who was himself devoted to the tuneful art), new Filean colleges were erected, and liberally endowed, for the education of select students; and of which the monarch's chief bard became in future the president, duly authorized to appoint inspectors fully qualified to carry into operation these improved regulations respecting the bards—with power, also, to nominate ollamhs for all the respective princes and chiefs in the kingdom. Dallan Fergoil, the monarch's ollamh-filea, assumed his newly-invested dignity to superintend the progress of the harmonious art.

The royal favour being again extended to the bards, through the influence of the venerable saint, who was invited from the scene of his mission in the island of Iona to give counsel at this assembly, and he having procured those salutary measures, and noble establishments for their order, we may well imagine this revered

* Oiliol Ollum, king of Munster, settled on his Ollamh-Filea Caribre, the barony of Carbre, county of Cork, so called from the bard's name.

The poetic De la Cour, writing to Lord Shannon on Poesy, and alluding to this circumstance, expressed regret that

> "No encouragement attends the Muse,
> Such as of old imperial patrons use;
> When pens unflatt'ring royaliz'd regard,
> And met a province for their just reward."

personage addressing them in the following familiar lines of Lucan :—

> " You, too, ye *bards*, whom sacred raptures fire
> To chant your heroes to your country's lyre—
> Who consecrate, in your immortal strain,
> Brave patriot souls in righteous battle slain—
> Securely now the tuneful task renew,
> And nobler themes in deathless songs pursue."*

We may now suspend for a while the historical notice of the bards, and examine the effects produced on the musical feeling of the people of this country by the introduction of the ancient ecclesiastical music of the earlier Christians ; and I may venture to premise, that this venerable church music will be found the basis of our more antique music, and that much of the peculiar freshness and originality of the latter, may be ascribed to its close analogy to those ancient ecclesiastical melodies which are of oriental character and primitive simplicity.

* Pharsalia.

CHAPTER VII.

ECCLESIASTICAL MUSIC.

As Dr. Burney remarks that "the national music of a country is good or bad, in proportion to that of its church service,"* so I may therefore briefly revert to that ancient system of church music which was introduced here, accompanying the offices of religion; and which may be regarded as tending to form a taste for the practice of music in Ireland at an early period.

Agreeably to the opinion of the learned Padre Martini, and other authorities, the ecclesiastical music of the first Christians was derived from that sung for ages past in the temple by the Hebrews, by whom it was transmitted to the apostles, and adopted in the Christian ceremonies; hence their exhortations to use the sublime canticles of David, "the sweet singer of Israel," as being the most excellent models of poetry and melody.

St. Paul exhorts the Ephesians: "speaking to yourselves," says the apostle, "in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your

* State of Music in Germany.

hearts to the Lord." I need not give numerous quotations on this subject.

Pliny, writing to Trajan, A. D. 111, says, that "the Christians assembled before day-break, to sing alternate hymns and psalms to Christ and to God." And we are told by Eusebius, that St. Ignatius, the disciple of St. John, had the first regular choir at Antioch, in which that *antiphonal*—that is, alternate or responsive—mode of singing was practised.

During the reign of Constantine, the first Christian emperor, A. D. 312, places were set apart for the different classes of singers, and the "form of chanting and singing the praise of God was exact and majestic."

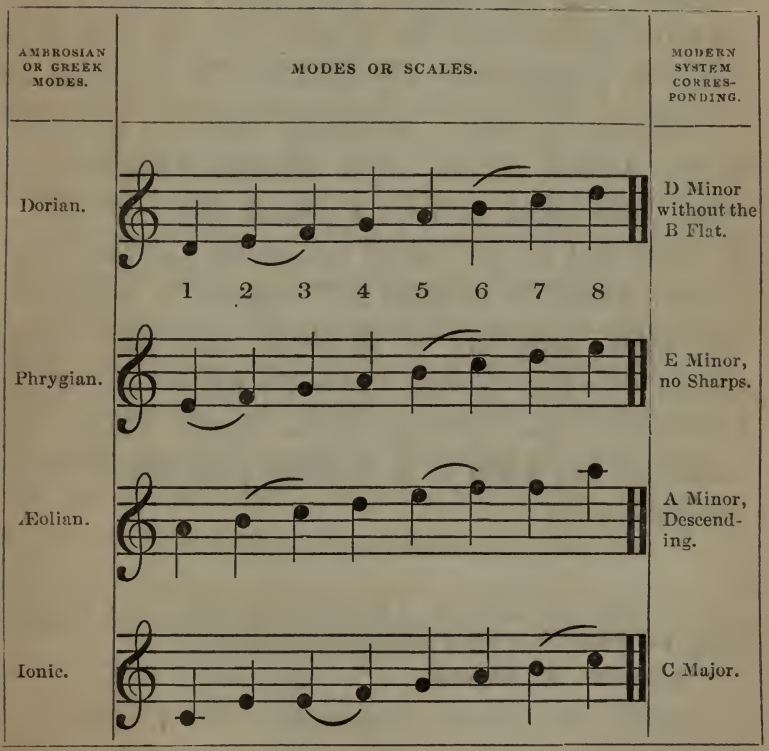
This ecclesiastical music continued to improve until the reign of Theodocius, when St. Ambrose introduced his celebrated chant, by adopting the eastern mode of singing into his church at Milan, A. D. 386; and this practice of "mutual consolation and exhortation, with a joint harmony of voices," was adopted by most of the congregations of the world, under the title of the Ambrosian Chant, as St. Augustine informs us; and who thus describes his impressions, on hearing these venerable chants—"as the voices flowed in at my ears, truth was distilled into my heart, and the affection of piety overflowed in sweet tears of joy."—(Confessions.)

The system of psalmody adopted from the Hebrews by St. Ambrose, and by him applied to the existing oriental Grecian modes, was that which was introduced into Ireland by St. Patrick, and which was cultivated with a degree of religious zeal by the ecclesiastics,

who added, occasionally, the soft tones of the harp to those primitive and pathetic canticles.

The Ambrosian Chant employed the *four* principal modes (scales or keys) of the Greeks (alluded to in a former chapter).

The mode, or scale, is a series of eight diatonic sounds, consisting of *five tones* and *two semitones*. The *position* of these semitones marks the difference of mode. The following Italian notation may illustrate the system :—



The brace thus ⌒ shows the *position* of the semitones, the change of which alters the name and character of the mode or scale.

To these *authentic* modes, the pontiff Gregory the Great added four others a *fifth* higher,* called the *plagal*, or collateral modes, (A.D. 590); he also substituted the grave *canto fermo*, or plain chant, for the more ornate *canto figurato;* and that improved system continues to the present time, and is denominated the *Gregorian chant*, after that venerable prelate.

As Dr. Burney could not discover any sensible difference between the Ambrosian and the Gregorian music, and neither could the learned Monsieur Choron, we may conclude, with an eminent and erudite prelate,† that the latter was based on the former, and that both were closely in resemblance, and that one was absorbed or merged into the other. Assuming, therefore, agreeably to the decision of the royal musician Charlemagne, "that eight modes or keys appeared quite sufficient," as comprised in the united Ambrosian and Gregorian system, which is melodial and diatonic in character, and which, according to Rousseau, and other acute writers, surpasses modern music for pathos and effect, I will submit the following tabular sketch, which, it is presumed, may assist us in forming some idea of those antique systems.

* Two scales or modes, one a fifth above the other, must be alike, except the difference of *pitch*, or degree of acuteness.

† Right Rev. Dr. Wiseman.

THE MUSICAL SCALE.

"The scale may be considered the elements of that beautiful and expressive language, given by kind nature to soothe the feelings and to charm the soul of man. On the scale is formed the delightful science of harmonic proportion, founded on principles of geometrical proportion; thus forming a portion of those beautiful creations of nature, which bear the impress of truth and simplicity. The scale is given by nature—any string will so arrange its *harmonics* as to give *four* successive sounds (or the tetrachord of the ancient Greek philosophers); so that two strings give the complete scale—which is a succession of *eight sounds*, from any sound to the *eighth above*. This scale contains *five tones* and two semitones (the eighth sound being a replicate of the first), and is called the diatonic scale. It assumes *two* characters or forms, by the *position* of those semitones. Thus, it is in the *major* mode, if the semitones appear between the 3d and 4th, and the 7th and 8th; and it is in the *minor* mode, when the *semitones* are between the 2nd and 3rd, and the 5th and 6th of the scale. This is the modern system of modes, in which the above *order* of semitones is preserved in the scale formed on any sound, by the use of marks of *elevation* or *depression* of the tone, called *sharps* and *flats*.

"The ancient ecclesiastical modes are formed by making *any* sound of the scale the *first* of a new series of eight, but *without* adding sharps or flats—thus having the semitones always between the *same letters*, as will be seen by the annexed table.

"The ancient Greek modes were formed in this manner, and each mode was called after some province of Asia. From these Greek modes, Gregory the Great, in the sixth century, formed the system of ecclesiastical music which is named the Gregorian Chant, after its inventor, and which is used with solemn effect to the present time. This system contained eight modes or scales, with *one* added, called the eighth irregular one. Each tone or mode had *two* principal sounds, the *dominant* and the *final*, which decided the name of the scale or mode.

"The following table will afford some idea of the ancient and modern systems of scales :—

GREEK MODES.	GREGORIAN.		MODERN SYSTEM CORRESPONDING.	
	Tone. *Dominant.* *Final.*			*Semitones between.*
Dorian . .	1.....La... / 2.....Fa...	Re.....	D min. no flats...	2 & 3—6 & 7 / E F B C
Phrygian	3.....Ut... / 4.....La...	Mi.....	E min. no sharps	1 & 2—5 & 6 / E F B C
Lydian . .	5.....Ut... / 6.....La...	Fa.....	F maj. no flat ...	4 & 5—7 & 8 / B C E F
Mixo-Lydian . .	7.....Re... / 8.....Do...	Sol	G maj. no sharp	3 & 4—6 & 7 / B C E F
Æolian . .	8 Irregular		A min. no sharps	2 & 3—5 & 6 / B C E F
Ionic . . .	.....		* C maj.	3 & 4—7 & 8 / E F B C

* The scale of B (*si*) is rejected, as it would give the *imperfect* or flat fifth, which was not used in the ancient *canto fermo*.

The *plagal*, or collateral Greek modes, are a fifth higher than the above.

The Gregorian music employs a stave of *four* lines, and requires *two clefs*, *do* (C) and *fa* (F), like the modern tenor and bass clefs. The

If we now compare some of our national original melodies with those scales, we shall perceive, I am inclined to think, that much of the originality and peculiar construction of those airs may be ascribed to their being composed in scales or modes corresponding with some of these modes here given; and I should therefore conclude, that the practice of this species of ecclesiastical music being well calculated to make strong impressions on the feelings, much of its pathetic character would naturally be imparted to national music during the progress of its development in Ireland. It may also be seen that there was no "want of a complete scale" in our Celtic music, (and any peculiar omissions of certain intervals will be noticed hereafter); for we have in those modes our modern major and minor

Abbot Guido d'Arezzo invented the time table in the twelfth century, and opened the way to counterpoint, or writing in parts, subsequently developed by Palestrina, the "prince of musicians."

"Amongst the Greek modes, the '*furious*' Phrygian, and the '*soft*' Lydian, appear to be the most opposite in character. We are told by Apuleius, that the Lydian was used to express sorrow or complaint, and the Phrygian was used for the ceremonies of religion. Thus Lucretius, speaking of the honours paid to Cybele, '*Magna deum mater*,' says, '*Et Phrygio stimulat numero cava Tibia menteis.*'

'And Phrygian airs the raptured soul inspire,
Rouse the strong passions, and to phrensy fire."

Dryden's celebrated Timotheus was not unskilled in the 'melting magic of the Lydian mode.' In his *Alexander's Feast*—

'Softly sweet, in Lydian measures,
Soon he sooth'd the soul to pleasures.'"

—(*Extract from the Author's Lectures on Music.*)

diatonic scales, besides those other modes which served, to some extent, the object of modulation. In illustration of these remarks, let us take the harp, (the national instrument of Ireland,) tuned in the Ionic mode, or key of C, and we have the modern diatonic scale in the major mode, with the semitones between the 3rd and 4th, and 7th and 8th intervals. In this class we may place such melodies as (like the beautiful air the "Coulin") the "Paisteen Fion," "The Fox's Sleep," or, "When he who adores thee;" and very many other exquisite and pathetic melodies belong to this class, and employ all the intervals of the diatonic major scale. Without altering the tuning of the harp, and by making A the key-note (or first of the series), we have the Æolian mode, agreeing with our minor scale (*descending*); the ancient air, "Shule Aroon," "I wish I were by that dim lake," serves as an example of this mode.

But the principal key, or *accordiatura*, of the harp was G major (with the F sharp). Here we have also a complete scale; and the next and most natural change or modulation would be to the E minor, agreeing with the "exulting and mystical" Gregorian 8th tone, irregular,* and also exactly with the perfect Phrygian (our E minor *descending*).† To this Phrygian mode, Sheldon says, "the Irish were wholly inclined;" a remark which appears quite true, inasmuch as most of our most exquisite airs are given in this impassioned mode. I need only name the charming melodies of "Lough Sheeling," the

Come, rest in this bosom

* Ps. "In exitu Israel."

† Our learned musicians write the F ♯ in the Phrygian mode.

"Renardine," the "Bunch of Rushes," the antique melody of "An Duibhghein Cealgach," "the Deceitful Stranger,"* as given by the *Citizen;* and many others which seem to breathe "the soul of song."† The musical amateur will observe that these, and melodies of this class, have not the "leading note," or major 7th, D ♯, so requisite in modern music; it is omitted as not

* O'Reilly says that Dubhgall signified "a Dane." English historians mention those swarms of sea-rovers who pillaged these islands towards the close of the eighth century, under the general cognomen of Danes, while by Irish annalists they are styled indifferently "galls," "gentiles," "dwellers on the lakes," or "pirates." However, philologists inform us that the compound term "dubh-loch-lanach," or "black man strong at sea," signifies a Dane.

In A.D. 838,‡ the *Fiongaill*, the "*white* strangers," or Norwegians, took possession of Dublin; and in the year 850, these were dispossessed by a considerable force of the Dubhgaills, or black strangers, the Danes.

"When the Northmen and Ostmen invaded Ireland, they were undoubtedly yet unconverted to Christianity; but Ireland had long been Christian. Therefore, it is said that the Danes are called *Dubhgeinte*, which name is interpreted "black gentiles." Whether this denomination for the strangers was borrowed from the word which (like all others used in connection with the ideas of Christianity) was borrowed from the Latin, and signified that those foreigners were still pagans, or was derived from the Celtic, and so would have been applicable to them after they had embraced the religion of the native Irish, it seems certain that the name of this air must lead us to refer its date back to very remote antiquity. It would be less ancient than airs which (like *Baal-tigh-abhran*,§ vulgò *Baltiorum*) belong to times when the country itself was pagan; but it probably dates between the beginning of the ninth and the end of the eleventh century."—*The Citizen*, 1841.

† The Gregorian Ps. "In exitu Israel," eighth tone irregular, and the grave melody the "Dies iræ," present exactly the same Phrygian scale, our E minor.

‡ Harris's Hist. Dublin. § See a former Chapter.

belonging to the antique forms of that mode, and also as it was not on the harp tuned in G, as already premised. The ancient melody to which the "Lamentation of Dierdre for the sons of Usnagh" is chanted by our peasantry, is also in this Celtic or Phrygian mode.

Besides these two principal modes, major and minor, it is obvious that the harp offered facilities, from the nature of its mode of tuning, or temperament, to perform airs formed on other ancient modes; thus, being tuned in G, and a melody being played in D, the 7th of the scale, or C, would be *natural*, or a tone below the key or tonic—hence the use of the *minor* 7th, so peculiar to most of our melodies. Of this class, the beautiful air "Open the door softly" offers an example; and also the no less charming melody, "If the sea were ink"—"Lay his sword by his side."

This peculiar character of the Mixo-Lydian mode is also found in such melodies as the "Ulican dul oh O," or song of sorrow, "Weep on," in which the presence and emphatic use of the *minor 7th* of the scale gives such pathetic expression to the air—a peculiarity which is heightened also by the omission of the major 7th, or leading note, preceding the tonal cadence.

This mode coincides with the Gregorian 8th tone. To perform airs of this class the harp might be in the scale of C, while the air would be in the scale of G—hence the natural F would be the minor 7th.

Without entering more into this subject, I think sufficient examples have been adduced to show the remarkable coincidence of our ancient national melodies with the early ecclesiastical music, and which embodies

the musical modes of the East; and I should conclude, by the internal evidence afforded by this construction and peculiarly expressive character of the airs themselves, that the primitive simplicity and pathos of the church music, and the construction and the mode of tuning the harp, have been the principal causes of our music possessing so much originality and expression;* to which may be also added those other characteristic features which constitute the physiognomie of the country, and which give a national sentiment to the music.

While on this subject, I may revert to the peculiar form and character of certain phrases of our melodies, in which we observe the prevalence of the third, fifth, and sixth, or *harmonic* intervals of the scale; and the omissions of other less harmonious sounds of the series, or, at least the less frequent use of these, and then only as passing or unaccented notes. The cause of this peculiar harmonious form of melody may probably be found in the resonant nature of the harp. For it is obvious that in most instances the strings would continue to vibrate longer than the exact time required by the melodial figure (if not stopped), so that the harpers, availing themselves of these resonant qualities of that instrument, would form those melodial phrases on sounds which would be in harmonic relation to each other, so that the succeeding tones of the melody would

* Dr. Burney tells us that, so late as the sixteenth century, in the secular music of Britain—as seen by Elizabeth's "*Virginal Book*," by Dr. Bull, (a collection of about four hundred folio pages)—"no transposed keys were used," "all the pieces being confined to the modes of the church."—*Hist. Mus.* vol. 3.

naturally produce a species of harmony by the resonance of the trembling chords. Hence it would follow, that any two *next* sounds, being inharmonious, would be less used, except as unaccented passing notes. So we find the harmonic intervals of the 3d and 5th, and the 3d and 6th, recurring in those airs; and also the peculiar effect of the 5th and 6th with the tonic, always so agreeable, and found in the works of the great masters of latter times. Those melodies, therefore, would afford a species of simple or natural harmony.*

The bold melody of the "Red Fox," and the antique air, "The Bonny Cuckoo," with many others, illustrate this proposition as to harmonious melody.

The emphatic use of the 6th imparts, according to Mr. Bunting, the true Celtic character to the melody. The presence of this interval denotes the simple modulation to the relative minor, which (of G) would give the E minor, or the Phrygian mode, so frequently heard in those charming melodies.

Some of our beautiful airs are peculiar in the omission of the *fourth* interval of the scale. The use of the harp would explain this exception; for being tuned in G with the F♯, should the melody be played in C, without *F being lowered,* the fourth would be omitted—the ♮F not having been previously prepared on the instrument.

But these altered modes of tuning the harp would be

* The simple harmony is represented by the intervals 1st, 3rd, 5th.

Scale—C D E F G A B C	5 G	6 A	5 B
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	3 E	3 E	3 G
	1 C	1 C	1 E

adopted agreeably to the fancy of the artist, or to suit the voice, as would likewise be the form of the melody, whether as to a complete scale, or the omission of any particular interval; so that it appears to me that the hypothesis as to "omissions" is of little moment, as these form but a minor feature in our airs, and do not prove the want of a perfect diatonic scale, as already shown.

The sonorous and prolonged vibrations of the deeper strings of the harp would be less easily put in repose by the atmospheric resistance; and the melody given by the smaller strings would naturally be in harmonic relation with the former, and all harsh and dissonant sounds would be avoided; hence the practice of this instrument would suggest a knowledge of simple harmony.

From what has been said, I may conclude that the national melodies of Ireland are formed on the ecclesiastical and Greek modes, having a complete diatonic scale, or the *octachord* of Pythagoras; and the refined ear, cultivated to drink only the liquid sweetness of modern science, must be struck with the primitive beauty and freshness of some of those melodial forms, which are in some instances distinct from the features of modern music.

I cannot better conclude this part of the subject than by quoting the words of the learned antiquarian Walker, who says, "the Irish music is, in some degree, distinguished from the music of every other nation, by an insinuating sweetness, which forces its way irresistibly to the heart, and there diffuses an extatic delight, that thrills through every fibre of the frame, awakes

sensibility, and agitates or tranquillizes the soul. Whatever passion it may be intended to excite, it never fails to effect its purpose; it is the voice of nature, and will be heard. We speak of the music of the ancient Irish; for music, like language, the nearer we re-mount to its rise amongst men, the more it will be found to partake of a natural expression. And though musical notation was not known amongst the aborigines of this island,* remains of their ancient music have been handed down to us by tradition in its original simplicity. This we owe to the fondness of the Irish for their national peculiarities; for the great Irish families, even to the last century, entertained in their houses harpers, who were the depositaries of their best pieces of music. These remains, which we consider as classics, have obtained for Ireland the honourable title of a SCHOOL FOR MUSIC."

* The present musical notation only became developed between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries.

CHAPTER VIII.

ECCLESIASTICAL MUSIC OF THE SEVENTH CENTURY.

The name of the venerable St. Columbanus, like that of SS. Ambrose and Gregory, is associated with the development of choral music at their respective early periods. The monastery of Bangor was not only celebrated in Ireland by its psalmody, or "laus perennis," but, by the subsequent career of St. Columbanus, it was "rendered famous throughout all Europe." The great monastery of Bangor (county Down) is supposed by Ware to have derived its name from the "white choire" which belonged to it; but agreeably to O'Halloran and Dr. O'Conor, the name *benn-choir* signifies "*sweet choir*." From the monastic code of St. Columbanus, we find that the practice of choral psalmody and antiphonal, or alternate, singing, was adopted to a considerable extent. From these rules we learn that the monks are to assemble thrice every night, and as often in the day, to pray and sing. In each office of the day they are to use prayers, and sing three psalms. In each office of the night, from October to February, they are to sing thirty-six psalms, and twelve anthems, at three several times; in the rest of the year, twenty-

one psalms and eight anthems; but on Sundays, and Sunday nights, twenty-five psalms and twenty-five anthems." Here was a perpetual psalmody, like that practised in Psalmody Isle, founded in the fourteenth century near Nismes, alluded to by Dr. Burney.

This *regula cœnobialis** was practised at the time of the Northumbrian mission from Bangor; and this antiphonal singing, "in two parts," was noticed by the venerable Bede in the seventh century, as also by Cambrensis in the twelfth. It was also carried to the Continent, by the venerable Columbanus; and the very antiphonary of Bangor itself is still preserved in MS. of the seventh century, in the monastery of Bobbio, San Columbano, in Italy, founded by the saint, where he died, A.D. 615.

The learned Gerbert, alluding to the propagation of Christianity among the German nations in that age, thus observes—that "to this period we may refer the antiphonary of the monastery of Bangor, whence St. Columbanus, coming forth with St. Abbo, his companion, not only imbued our Germany with the light of Christian faith, but also with the principles of ascetic living." "Doubtless," continues our author, "the first rule for arranging ecclesiastical services amongst us, as made up of psalms, canticles, hymns, collects, and antiphonies, was hence derived."†

* "Totum psalterium inter duas supradictas noctes numero cantent, *duodecim choris.* * * * Ad initium vero noctis duodecim psalmi similiter *psalluntur.* * * * Sub uno cursu 75 (psalmi) cantantur."—*Reg. Mon.*

† Gerbert, Mus. Sac. An. 1784.

Archbishop Ussher and Mabillon* cite, in reference to this choral music at Bangor, the tract *De Cursum Ecclesiasticorum Origine*, printed by Sir H. Spelman, and of which there was extant a manuscript copy, nine centuries old, at the time when Ussher wrote, (1639). This tract states that "St. Jerome affirms that the same service *(cursum)* which is performed at the present time (seventh century) by the Scots, was chanted likewise by St. Mark." "Patrick, when placed, by Lupus and Germanus, as archbishop over the Scots and Britons, chanted the same service there, and after him St. Wandilochus Senex, and St. Comogill, who had about three thousand in their monastery, (chanted it also). * * * * St. Wandilochus being thence sent as a preacher by St. Comogill, as also St. Columbanus, they arrived at Louvain, in Gaul, and there they chanted the same service, and thence the fame of their sanctity was spread abroad."

However hypothetical the antiquity thus assigned to the antiphonary of Bangor may be deemed by some critics, yet the historic evidence of its use in the seventh century, cannot but be regarded with much interest by the musical antiquary. This antiphonary is also preserved by Muratori, in the Ambrosian anecdotes, and by the learned Dr. O'Conor, in his *Rerum Hibernicarum Scriptores;* and *as it is written in measured rhythm, it* tends to show that the Irish ecclesiastics at Bangor were acquainted with this species of rhythmical hymns, previous to the appearance of similar compositions on the

* De Liturg. Gal.

Continent. From the extant Latin hymns of St. Columba,* composed about the middle of the sixth century, we are led to think that choral psalmody was chanted at Iona in a manner similar to that of Bangor.

Protegat nos altissimus	May the High and Holy One
De suis sanctis sedibus,	Guard us, from his heavenly throne,
Dum ibi hymnos canimus	While we sing with grateful hearts,
Decem statutis vicibus.†	Hymns, in ten appointed parts.

It likewise appears that church music in Ireland at this period (seventh century), enjoyed no inconsiderable degree of repute on the Continent; as we find Gertrude, daughter to the potent Maire du Palais, Pepin, sending to Ireland for persons qualified to instruct the nuns of the Abbey Niville in psalmody.‡

Although we have no positive historic evidence as to the species of instrumental accompaniment applied to the psalmody in Ireland, and as the venerable Bede does not allude to the use of the organ in these countries—its general use in Italy, Germany, as well as England, being ascribed by Muratori, and Mabillon, to the tenth century§—yet as the harp and psaltery only were used in the early Christian worship, and the former of which being, agreeably to Cambrensis, the favourite instrument

* Not the same as St. Columbanus.

† Colgan Trias Thaun.

‡ "Pour instruire la communautè dans la chant des Psaumes et la meditation des choses saintes."

FLEURY, quoted by D'Alton.

§ The Annals of Ulster, A.D. 814, record the burning of the organ at Cluincrema, Ireland.

of the Irish ecclesiastics, and as, in the seventh century, the term *psalluntur*, used in Columbanus' Antiphonary, seems to indicate an instrumental accompaniment, we may conclude that the harp had a place in the hymnal performance sat Bangor and Iona, as it has also been used in the choirs of some parts of the country up to a late date in Ireland. This opinion is corroborated by glancing at the frequent allusions to the use of the harp at an early period. Mr. Moore remarks, that, "in its infant state, poetry has been seldom separated from music; and it is probable that most of the stanzas cited by our annalists were meant originally to be associated with music." We are told that some of the juvenile works of St. Columbanus were worthy of being sung. The biographer of St. Columba represents that venerable man as sitting with his brethren on the banks of the beautiful lake Kee,* while among them was a poet skilled, we are told, in modulating song to verse, "after the manner of his art."†

The most general opinion is, that these songs and chants were accompanied by a portable stringed instrument, called the *cruit*, of the harp species.—(See Chap. XII.)

We find preserved in the "Annals of the Four Masters" the following touching passage, in allusion to

* County of Roscommon.

† Alio in tempore St. Columba, cum juxta stagnum Cei, propé ostium fluminis quod Latine *Bos* dicitur (i. e. the Boyle river), die aliqua cum fratribus sederet, quidam ad eos Scoticus poeta devenit.

Qui cum recessisset, Fratres ad Sanctum, cur, inquiunt, aliquod ex more suæ artis, canticum non postulasti modulabiliter decantari.—ADAMNAN.

the death of St. Columba, and translated by Dr. O'Conor, from the poem, or *oraison funèbre*, of Dallan Feargall, anno 593:—"Like a song of the cruit, without joy, is the sound which follows our master to the tomb." "And its common use in the eighth century," says our historian Moore, "as an accompaniment to the voice, may be implied from Bede's account of the religious poet Ceadmon, who, in order to avoid taking a part in the light songs of society, always rose, as he tells us, from table when the harp was sent round, and it came to his turn to sing and play."

It is hardly necessary to extend these quotations, to show the use of the harp as an accompaniment to the voice, previous to the eulogistic notice of our music by Cambrensis in the twelfth century. We may conclude, then, that its tones were employed to give greater effect to the choral music of that period, which also tended to form a general taste for the cultivation of sweet song.*

* In an ancient poem of probably the sixth century, descriptive of the famous *Teach Mid Chuarta*, or Hall of Tarah, a third place is assigned for the *Cruitire*, or harpers, amongst those occupants of the various seats in that hall. This is in accordance with the ancient laws in favour of the Bardic order.

CHAPTER IX.

THE RHETORICAL INFLECTIONS OF THE CELTIC POETRY.

THE eloquent Raynal observes, that "the music of every nation must be subservient to its language." We are told by some of our most learned philologists, that this Indo-European language is soft and expressive in its inflections; and the learned linguist, Colonel Vallancey, says, that this Irish or Celtic language, "is more agreeable in its inflections, and lends itself to the musical modulations better than any other in Europe," as it not only possesses all "the most proper qualities for song," "le plus convenable au chant," which Rousseau attributed to the Italian language, but by a peculiarity of its own, the harsher consonants can be ellipsed, so that the euphonic poetical phrases formed, as the learned Dr. O'Conor observes, "a music in themselves."

After the introduction of the Latin literature of that period, by St. Patrick, it became generally cultivated; and our bards, from their previous mental acquirements, made rapid progress in this, which might be termed the ecclesiastical language. The chief bard, Fiech, (afterwards the distinguished and venerable bishop of Sletty,)

is said to have overcome its difficulties in a very short time, such was the zeal with which it was studied.*

From about the sixth century, the Christian clergy made use of certain points and characters to indicate the varied tones and inflections of the voice. This system was most probably derived from a similar one adopted by the Hebrew rabbi, in the fifth century, which served to regulate the more correct mode of chanting those venerable canticles which were traditionally handed down as accompanying the Jewish ceremonies.

There were *three* species of these marks—namely, the grammatical, the rhetorical, and the musical. From the *two* former was derived that mode of punctuation used throughout the western continent to the present time.

The *third*, or musical, denoted the tone and inflection of the voice, and supplied a species of *notation* for the more correct modulations in singing the Latin hymns and psalmody. The ecclesiastical music, marked with these musical accents, was denominated *sulcos*, or marked lines. These musical accents were also called by the Latins, "tractim, punctatim, and punctatim canare."†

There were two classes of points—namely, the *toni*, or sounds, and *pneumata*, or breaths. The toni indicated the pitch, or tonal ascent and descent, or relative distance of the sounds of the voice, one from the other.

* Bede, seventh century writes, that there were *five* languages spoken in Ireland in his time, the Celtic, Welch, Gothic, Teutonic, and the Latin. *Five* also in Britain.

† Chart, Caroli II., Regis Sicilæ. An. 1304.

The pneumata regulated the length of the vowels, and the points of rest, or respiration, which were principally regulated by the time of the syllables, and the natural cadence of the poetry, until the *time table* of the thirteenth century afforded definite proportions for the sounds. In the same manner, previous to this important improvement, the Greeks and Romans sung their hymns and songs; and even in their orations and dramatic exhibitions, they "regulated the voice according to the musical cadence and harmonic principles."

From the remarks of Cambrensis,† we find that the Hibernian prelates and clergy cultivated music to a considerable extent; and to the study of church psalmody they added that of the harp. They would have been acquainted with the Eastern or Ambrosian music, which was, most probably, written in the Greek notation, with the Greek letter at the beginning of the lines, as also the *sulcated* mode. About the eighth century, the music and poetry became separated in the Western parts of Europe. These Hibernian ecclesiastics would naturally impart this knowledge to the Irish Bards and Fileas; for we find several of the Irish poems marked with musical accents after the manner of the Latin sulcated poems.

As a matter of curiosity for the musical antiquarian, I have placed those accents in a tabular form, in which he will find the first dawning of our scale and *time table.*

* Episcopi et Abbates, et sancti in Hibernia viri Cytheras circumferre, et in eis modulando piè delectari consueverunt.—CAMB. Top. Hib. (Twelfth Cent.)

TABLE OF MUSICAL INFLECTIONS.

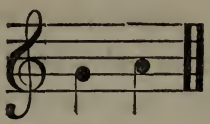
The *sulcos*, or marked line of poetry, was denominated *car* in the Irish, and *ceol*, or *chieol*, a musical note.

Characters.	Latin Names.	Irish Names.	Exponents in Modern Notation.
/	Acutus.	Ardceol.	Third Ascending,
|	Modicus.	Ceol.	Tonic or Pitch,
\	Gravis.	Basceol.	Third Below,
⌒	Circumflexus.	Circeol.	Descending,
∧	Ditto.	Ditto.	Ascending,

A *dot* or point placed *over* any of these characters, ndicated the raising of the voice a *tone* above that represented—thus /·

A Fourth Ascending,

And a dot *under* depressed the voice a tone below the character, giving the interval of a second,



The same effect for the other marks—thus giving a notation for the musical serves of consecutive sounds. And the semitones were indicated by characters of different colour.

The second species of character, *pneumata breaths*, or *neama*, indicated the length the tones should be sustained, thus performing the office of our *cantus mensurabilis*, or time table,* which is a modification of the former. This also had *four* species—

Latin Characters.	Irish Characters.	Name.	Proportions.
=	—	Largus,	Maxima or longest sound 1
—	–	Longus,	Half the former, . . 2
⌣	⌣	Breve,	Half the longus, . . 4
◡ or Ω	∧	Semibreve,	Half the breve,† . . 8

* Guido, eleventh century; Franco of Cologne, twelfth century, &c. The time table was only developed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries on the continent.

† Jn. Monachum, in libris de Musica.

Thus we find that the ecclesiastical music employed a notation prior to the middle ages, to indicate the tone, musical cadence, and the rhythm or syllabic proportion. The tonal marks were placed *over*, and those to indicate the rhythm *under* the *sulcated* lines of the poetry.

Nor are we certain that these were the only marks used by the ecclesiastics and bards, as those points or accents must have been increased since their introduction up to the development of the *time* table; and as we shall find that the musical system used by the bards was distinct from that subsequently perfected on the continent, we may infer that they used musical notation, more, however, for church music than for the secular or festive.

From an antique Irish MS., quoted by the learned Walker, which treats of those musical accents, and alluding to those peculiar musical and poetical properties of the Irish language, the writer says that this tongue is "exceedingly harmonious, and well calculated for poetical and musical compositions; far superior either to the Latin or any of the modern tongues;" a circumstance that confirms the assertion of Cambrensis, who, speaking of the Irish music, says, "it was in his time superior to the Welsh—theirs being of a grave and solemn nature, whereas that of the Irish was soft, lively, and melodious, their fingers passing rapidly over the strings of the harp, preserving a true musical proportion, nor in any part injuring the art among shakes of the notes, and a multiplicity of intricate musical sounds, such as soft and pleasant notes divided by just proportion into concords and discords, making a complete melody, all of

which depended upon the power and variety of the sounds,* and the length of the Irish vowels, and to which the Welsh language is a stranger."

Although the above passage is perhaps not so accurate in technical description as our notions of the more developed state of the art would require; yet we cannot fail to observe the unlimited eulogy which the writer seems obliged to bestow on the music of that period, and on the harmonious expression of the Irish language.

* Top. Hib. 3.

CHAPTER X.

THE BARDS, FROM THE EIGHTH TO THE ELEVENTH CENTURY.

LITERATURE, science, and the polite arts, progressed towards perfection until the invasion of the Danes in A.D. 787, at which period, according to the learned Dr. Prideaux, Ireland was the prime seat of learning in Christendom.* This devotion to literary pursuits is also noticed by Dr. Samuel Johnson, who, writing to the venerable historian, Dr. O'Conor, says, that "Dr. Leland begins his history too late—the ages which deserve an exact inquiry, are those times (for such times there were) when Ireland was the school of the West, the quiet habitation of sanctity and literature."

This invasion of those Northern marauders tended directly to check the onward progress of the arts; and as those sanctuaries of learning and piety were despoiled by rude hands, the song of gladness was hushed, the

* Alfred, "the wise" monarch of Britain, devoting himself to piety and literature, voluntarily retired to Ireland, where, for fifteen years, "he engaged a life of philosophical tranquillity, and progressive improvement."—(Turner Hist. Ang. Sax. Bk. 3,) during which period he studied the harp, with which he obtained access to the camp of the Danes.

light of learning became eclipsed, and the liberal arts languished. The Northern usurper, Turgesius, with professed enmity to learning, burned or razed to the ground all our theological and filean colleges; destroyed all literary remains within his power; and even "against the professors of learning, and of music, his Goth-like fury was directed." The bards, thus driven from their seminaries, sought the protection of their patrons; while some lay concealed in the woods, or the mountain retreats, others were led into captivity; "and the harps of the persecuted bards, like those of the Israelites on a similar occasion,* were unstrung, or struck to a lamentable strain in a silent valley, or beneath the shelter of a rocky cavern."

The hardy Northman invader having "bitten the dust," his followers were dispersed, and Ireland once more began to breathe after the effects of those rude hostile conflicts, when the pious, learned, and heroic Cormac was proclaimed King of Munster. In the person of this prince, the pontifical and regal dignities united, as he was at the same time Archbishop of Cashel, and King of Munster—Ninth century.

As a poet he wooed the timeful muse, and we find that

"He knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme."

To his industry and genius we owe the completion of the Psalter of Cashel, so that to his character of prelate-king we may superadd, with perhaps some little incongruity, that of poet-historian.

* Ps. 137—"By the waters of Babylon," &c.

He thus speaks in his poetical will :—

> " My *Psalter*,* which preserves the ancient records
> And monuments of this my native country,
> Which are transcribed with great fidelity,
> I leave to Ronal Cashell, to be preserved
> To after times and ages to come."†

Among the bardic poets of this period we may name Fothadh (poet to the monarch Aodh Finnliath), one of whose odes is still extant, and which was addressed to his royal patron on his coronation.

The celebrated Maolmura is recorded to have been one of the most skilful fabricators of imaginative poetry of this period ; and some of those poems alluding to earlier times are from his pen. His mixed character of bard and historian is thus found in the Annals of the Four Masters, recording his death, A.D. 884—" Died, Maolmura, a learned and truly well-taught poet, and an historian skilled in the language of the Scots."

About 896, the poet Flann MacLonan flourished, he was called " the Virgil of the race of Scota ; and he held the distinguished office of ard-ollam, or chief poet of all Ireland." This gift of poesy appears to have been hereditary in this laureate, as his mother, Laitheog, having attained such reputation in the art as to have

* " The original Psalter of Cashel was long supposed to be lost, but it is now said to be deposited in the British Museum."—*Trans. Iberno-Celt. Soc.*

† The small and beautiful chapel erected by him on the rock of Cashel, " bearing his name, is an index of the progress of the useful and elegant arts at this period."—Ninth century.

affixed popularly to her name the designation of "the poetic."*

After the death of the monarch Malachy the Second, it is thought by Dr. O'Conor that the arts of poetry and music were separated;† and the ancient lyric measure fell into disuse, with the rhythmical numbers of that age. "They form a music of themselves," he observes, "independent of the air or instrumental accompaniment, such as a definite number of syllables, harmonised by a variety of concords, correspondencies, unions, and other attributes, which, being peculiar to Irish verse, cannot be expressed in any modern language."

"It seems to me," continues the learned doctor, "that the musician must be confined in his art had he been constrained to adapt his compositions to some of the variable measures of the latter bards."‡

On the accession of the monarch Brian Boru to the throne of Ireland, an. 1001, the sun of science which had been so long obscured, now shone forth with increased splendour. "Brian the brave"§ having vanquished the Danes and Northmen in several engagements, he applied his energies to repair the ravages committed by them; and having restored to his country the blessing of "peace, the nurse of science," he re-established the filean and theological colleges with additional endow-

* An. IV. Mag.—MOORE.

† See the preceding chapter. Beauford names the eighth century.

‡ Dissertation on the History of Ireland.

§ Moore's bold verses—

"Remember the glories of Brian the brave."

ments, and newly-conferred privileges; and other institutions for learning and piety were founded, so that prosperity and social improvement became generally diffused. Such were the effects of this monarch's policy, as some poetical authorities tell us, that a maiden of great beauty, adorned with jewels and gold, travelled around the island without any attempt being made on her honour or her treasures.

In Feller (*Dict. Hist.*) these bardic verses are thus translated by L. Tolendal:—

" Une vierge, unissant aux dons de la nature
De l'or et de rubis l'eclat et la valeur,
A clartè du jour, ou dans la nuit obscure,
D'une mer jusqu' a l'autre allait sans protecteur,
Ne perdait rien de sa parure,
Ne risquait rien pour sa pudeur."

On this incident, the beautiful lines of Erin's Bard are well known—

" Rich and rare were the gems she wore,
And a bright gold ring on her wand she bore;
But, oh! her beauty was far beyond
Her sparkling gems, or her snow-white wand.

" Lady! dost thou not fear to stray,
So lone and lovely through this bleak way?
Are Erin's sons so good or so cold
As not to be tempted by woman or gold?

" Sir Knight! I feel not the least alarm,
No son of Erin will offer me harm;
For though they love woman and golden store,
Sir Knight! they love honour and virtue more."

Brian was passionately devoted to music, for which reason he is usually depicted in the attitude of leaning on the harp: he not only loved but honoured this divine art. Of the harp of exquisite workmanship, now in Trinity College, said to be that of Brian, some remarks will be made in the next chapter on the harp. Before closing this part of the subject, I may allude to this monarch's ollamh-filea, or laureate, MacLeig, who was an eminent poet. A Dan or poem of his still extant, is allowed, by the linguist, Mr. T. O'Flannagan, to possess much merit.

I shall now proceed to offer a few observations on the national instrument of Ireland, whose form and soft tones conjure up so many associations of the past to the poetic imagination; and of which the Irish poet, Samuel Lover, sings—

"Oh! give me one strain
Of that wild harp again,
In melody proudly its own;
Sweet harp of the days that are gone."

CHAPTER XI.

ON THE MUSICAL SYSTEM OF THE IRISH BARDS.—THE HARP.

ALTHOUGH writing on vellum was known in Ireland about the fifth century—and history points to the use of letters prior to the Christian era—yet not much scriptural evidence has reached us, as to the use of written musical notation by the bards in those earlier days. The absence of such remains is probably owing to the practice pursued since the time of the Druids, who taught the student to store his memory with the musical treasure; and thus the bard always performed in public without written notes.*

I have already alluded to the species of musical notation used for psalmody,† and it is most probable that at the separation of poetry and music, about the ninth century, the system of instrumental music began to develop itself in Ireland, so that it was well understood previous to the improvements of Guido in Italy (eleventh

* Brompton says, that the bards taught from memory, in the time of Henry Second.

† Chap. IX.

century) and so highly cultivated, as to call forth the eulogy of Cambrensis in the twelfth century.

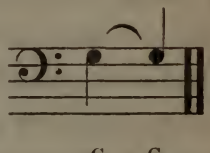
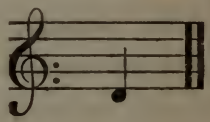
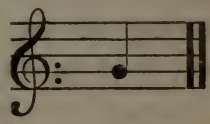
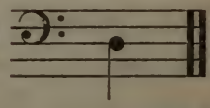
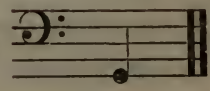
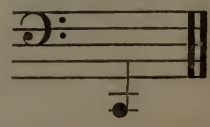
But at a later period, the musical system of our bards has been given in notation; and we find that, if the beautiful melodies of our isle required any additional proof of their being in a distinct school to that of the Continent at present, and of their being the offspring of genius in earlier days, we have ample evidence in the peculiar musical system as developed by our harpists. We are also gratified to find so much propriety and poetical expression in the terms used by them, and which seem to reflect the ideas which those various musical forms suggest. Thus with all the charm of poetic imagery, the *unison*, or two strings tuned alike, to G, in the centre of the harp scale, were called "the sisters;" and in a similar way, the important interval of the fifth above (D), was called "the string of the leading sinews," and denominated also "the string of melody;" in this way all the harp strings were designated.

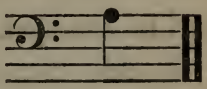
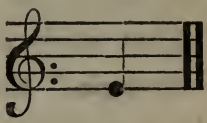
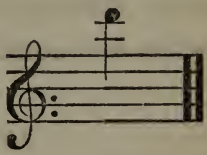
The compass of the Irish harp was from CC (the lowest string of the violoncello, which gives sixty-four vibrations in a second of time) to D in alt (above the lines in the treble), thirty notes, about four octaves. It was generally tuned in the scale of G; but by the alteration of one string a semitone, the key might be changed to C or D, from G. In these keys, the *diatonic* scale was perfect and complete,* similar to ours now in use. The

* See Chap. VII..

harp, in this temperament, was suited to give melodies in the ancient Grecian modes, as already alluded to, and on which most of our melodies seem formed.

THE HARP STRINGS.

NAMES.	TRANSLATED.	EXPONENTS IN NOTATION.
Caomhluighe,	Lying together, or "*the sisters*,"	*Unison*,  G G
Tead na feithe-o-lach,	String of the leading Sinews,	Fifth,  D
Dofhregrach Caomluighe,	Answering,	Octave,  G
Freagrach-tead na feithe-o-lach,	Resp. to leading Sinews,	Octave below the Fifth,  D
Cronan,	Drone Bass,	Octave below, 
Cronan ioch-darchanus,	Lowest Note,	C. C. 

Names.	Translated.	Exponents in Notation.
Gilly Caomluighe,	Servant to the Sisters,	 A
Gilly Tead na feithe-o-lach,	Servant to the leading Sinews,	 E
Uach-dar-chanus,	Highest Note,	 D

In like manner, every string had its respective name. One string called the *Teadleaguidh*, or falling string, was tuned to the lowest E or F in the bass, as the melody required. This string, in its lowered position, would form the tonal bass for the Phrygian, or E minor mode. The harp was tuned in fifths and octaves.

Without extending the musical examples, I will briefly observe, that a rapid and brilliant diatonic passage of two octaves and a fifth, ascending or descending, was called "a great stream,"—"*sruith mor*;" passages of less extent and of similar form, were called the "little stream," or "*sruith beg*." Of the melodial ornament, cor-

responding with our "*appogiatura*," the Irish harpists had three kinds; also different triplets. They designated what we call the shake or "*trillo*," as "*barlluith*," that is, the "activity of fingers," and of which they had no less than seven kinds.

Double harmonies, called "swelling out," were played with either or both hands. In the latter case, harmony in *four* parts would be the result.

That mode of striking a chord which we designate "arpeggio," they styled "*glasluith*," or "quick locking," of which they had *four* kinds.* All these, and other different musical effects, had their respective names and notation,

THE PRINCIPAL KEYS WERE—

Leath glass,	Half note,	F ♯	Key of G.
Fuigheall-mor,	Great sound,	(C ♯)	—— D.
Fuigheall-beg,	Lesser sound,	Flat Key,	—— F.
Uan fuigheall,	Single sound,	Another name for G.	

Of *time*, there were six kinds:—"the trebly rapid," the jig, planxty, and festive; dirge or lamentation, with words; bold, heroic, martial, "tempo ordinario;" lamentation—musical dirges, with words; phurt or lesson time—practical exercises.

The ancient Irish harpists cultivated *three* species of

* They gave these arpeggios beginning with the upper notes of the chord, a contrivance which the great violinist, Paganini, adopted with novel and electric effect, the usual mode being from the deepest note upwards.

composition, answering to the three musical modes borrowed by the Greeks from the Egyptians. These modes were—The *Gollttraidheacht*, "to elevate the soul to martial action, or to excite the more humane dispositions of love and mirth;" probably the Phrygian mode. *Geanttraidheacht*—The dolorous—lamentation for unsuccessful heroes; much used since the twelfth century; melancholy music. *Suanttraidheacht*—"Lulling sound," for composing the soul to rest after the mental or corporeal labours of the day.

Dr. O'Conor, writing to the learned Mr. Walker, says, that "in every concert, the Abhram, or song, accompanied the instrumental music, and the ode was invariably adopted to the species intended; whether the heroic, the dolorous, or somniferous." "By this description," continues the learned historian, "you find that our ancients in Ireland were far from being strangers to the power of harmonized sound, in directing as well as exciting the human passions. Sounds were, therefore, cultivated, and modified so as to produce extraordinary civil and political effects on the minds of men, whom we account barbarous because they held no intellectual commerce with the more polished people of Greece or Rome."

The Irish language, by its richness in musical terms, and the variety of its expressions relating to the musical art (which are about two hundred in number), exhibits further evidence of the "wonderful mass of musical acquirements, in an apparently self-taught community."*

* Bunting.

From what has been said as to this musical system of the Irish bards, it would appear that it possessed the principal elements of our modern notation; and yet, from the terms and nomenclature, we should hardly pronounce them to be identical. However, history seems to favour the opinion that this bardic system was practised prior to the development of the continental musical system of our times.*

* The antique chronicler, Brompton, thus speaks of the varied character of the Bardic Music of Ireland: "Et cum Scotia, hujus terræ filia, utatur lyrâ, tympano et choro, ac Wallia cithera, tubis et choro Hibernici tamen in duobus musici generis instrumentalis, *quamvis præcipitem et velocem, suavem tamen et jucundam*, crispatis modulis et intricatis notulis, *efficiunt harmonium.*"—*Hist. Angl.*

CHAPTER XII.

THE MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS OF THE IRISH.

For many reasons, the *harp* deserves the first place. There were *four* species of this instrument, namely—first, the *clar-seth*, or *clar-seach;* secondly, the *keir-nine;* thirdly, the *cionar cruit;* fourthly, the *creamtine cruit.*

The *clar-seth*, or *clar-seach*, usually called the *Irish harp*, is of such remote antiquity in Ireland, that Vinc. Gallilei,* with much injustice to Jubal, ascribes its invention to the Irish; however, though not the inventors, they enjoyed the use of this instrument "much earlier than any of the other western nations."†

"The clar-seach," says the venerable historian, Dr. O'Conor, "was introduced hither by the Celto-Phœnician colony, called the Milesians, which arrived here from Spain before the Christian era;" and with due deference to such an authority, the learned antiquarian

* Father to the celebrated astronomer.—*Anc. and Mod. Mus. Florence*, 1581.

† Walker.

Walker, coincides in this derivation, to which history and tradition seem to point.*

Fetis, the learned and acute director of the *Rèvue Musicale*, alludes to the harp, which he says is represented upon the most ancient monuments amongst the Hebrews and other eastern nations, also in Egypt. The Greeks and Romans were acquainted with its use. The *trigone* or *sambuque* "was nothing more than a harp." This writer further adds, that "a learned commentator on the poems of Callimachus, has proved that all the instruments with oblique strings, such as the *nablum*, the *barbitos*, the *magade*, the *psalterium*, and the *sambuque*," as named in the Holy Scriptures, and in the writings of antiquity, "were varieties of the harp," and were of "Phœnician, Chaldaic, or Syrian origin."† The *Cinnara* of the Romans was a harp, like the *kynnor* or *kinnar* which is the name given *in the Hebrew text to David's harp*.

With regard to the compass and power of the ancient Irish harp, we cannot now form any definite idea; but at about the ninth century, it would appear, that, with that retentive feeling for the past which has characterised this people, it is probable "that their favourite instrument was kept sacredly unaltered;" however, we find this instrument having the same power to charm the ears of the English poets and philosophers in later

* The hypothesis of Dr. Ledwich, as to the Danish derivation of it, seems to want historic evidence; an examination of his supposition, would lead me beyond the proposed limits of these pages.

† An. 1846.

times, "as when modulated by the bard Cronan, in the sixth century, upon the banks of the lake Kee."*

Drayton pays the following tribute to its pleasing effects:—

"The Irish I admire,
And still cleave to that lyre,
As our muse's mother;
And think, till I expire,
Apollo's such another."*†

The sculptured remains, and other illustrations, may afford us some notion as to the form and use of the harp.

I will briefly allude to two monuments—one of the eleventh century, and the other of a much earlier period—on which we have correct delineations of the harp. The first is the "*theca*," or ornamented cover of an Irish manuscript, containing, among other writings, a liturgy of the seventh century, described by the Rev. Dr. O'Conor, and which is now preserved in the library of the Duke of Buckingham, among the Stowe collections. It appears, from inscriptions on the work, that it was executed about 1064, for Donchad, son of Brian, king of Ireland.

Among the ornaments of this cover are five delineations of the harp. One engraved on the silver plate of the *theca* is of quadrangular form, like that given by Cambrensis in an illuminated MS. of the twelfth century, in which the Irish harper is represented as holding

* Vide Moore.

† Also Bacon's Eulogy, second part of this work.

the instrument on his knees, and playing with both hands.* The harps on the other ornaments of the *theca* are represented on a larger scale, yet not allowing scope for more than four or five strings.

On one of these ornaments, observes Dr. O'Conor, is the "image of a man dressed in a tunica, ... girdled round his waist, his arms are extended round two harps, which support the arms on either side." This antique relic illustrates also the arts of embossing, enamelling, jewelling, and engraving at that time. These, and the sculptured harp on the monument at Nieg, in Rosshire,† present early delineations of the harp in its more complete form.

The next illustration is of a much earlier date, and forms one of the ornamental compartments of a sculptured cross, at the antique church of Ullard, county of Kilkenny, which, from the style of its architecture, and the workmanship, is evidently more ancient than the like monument at Monasterboyce, known to have been erected prior to 830. In this ornament the figure is represented as playing upon a harp, which rests on his knee; and it cannot fail to be regarded with interest, as "being the *first specimen of a harp without a fore pillar that has been hitherto discovered out of Egypt;*"‡ and it thus seems to confirm Mr. Bruce's testimony as to its Egyptian prototypes, and to suggest also, that, to the original difficulty of supposing an instrument without a

* Drawings by Mr. Planche, in his costumes of the British people.

† Supposed to be erected by the ancient Scots.

‡ Petrie.

front pillar, capable to resist the tension of the strings, might be added the not less startling hypothesis that the Irish harp was derived originally from Egypt! This proposition might afford scope for much interesting speculation as to the mode in which it found its way to these countries, but would probably exceed the space I wish to occupy. I may, however, advert to the coincidence exhibited in the monument erected at Petau, in Stiria, during the time of Emperor Aurelius,* where the Thracian Orpheus is represented as playing on an instrument exactly resembling that on the *theca* of the Stowe M.S.—(Drawings of Pere Montfançon.) The former instrument is supposed to be the Egyptian harp in its state of transition, having received the improvement of the forearm, and previous to its having assumed the triangular form.†

But to return to our historical sketch, we find that the Welsh received this instrument from Ireland, as Caradoc affirms; substituting afterwards gut and hair, in preference to the metal strings used by the Irish; hence the name of *Teylin*, given to the harp by the Welsh, is, from the Irish language, Teadlonn, pronounced *Tealoin*, or *Telin*, according to the philologist, Colonel Vallancey. In the eleventh century, the musical code of Wales was regulated by harpists from Ireland.‡ Omitting here the remarks of Cambrensis, we come to the testimony of Dante, the poet, (born A.D. 1265,) as quoted by the elder Galilei, who wrote about the middle of the six-

* Second century.

† G. Petrie, Esq., M.R.I.A.

‡ Vide Part Second.

teenth century. Speaking of the Irish harp, the latter says, that "this most ancient instrument was brought to us from Ireland, as *Dante* says, where they are excellently made, and in great numbers, the inhabitants of that island having practised on it for *many and many ages*. * * * * The harps which this people use, (*i. e.* in Galilei's own time,) are considerably larger than ours, and have generally the strings made of brass, and a few of steel for the higher notes, as in the *Clavichord*. * * * The number of strings is fifty-four, and in some sixty. * * * I had a few months since, by the civility of an Irish gentleman, an opportunity of seeing one of their harps, and after having minutely examined the arrangement of its strings, I found it was the same which, with double the number, was introduced into Italy a few years ago."*

I may refer to one interesting monument of the fourteenth century, of native workmanship. It is a reliquary, or portable shrine, called the *Fiachail Phadruigh*—from having contained, as it is said, a tooth of St. Patrick. It was executed by the order of Thomas de Bramingham, eighth lord of Athenry, about A.D. 1350, and is now possessed by Sir Valentine Blake. On this reliquary is sculptured, in metal, a kneeling figure playing the harp with both hands;† the harp strings appear to be thirty in number. From this relic we can form an accurate

* Vinc. Galilei on Ancient and Modern Music. Florence 1581. Vide S. Ferguson, Esq., M.R.I.A., Antiquity of the Harp.

† As in Ovid—

"Learn with *both hands* to sweep the Naulian lyre,
And pour enchantment from the according wire."

DR. BUSBY.

idea of the capabilities of the harp at that period; an instrument with the compass of thirty strings would be fully capable of those effects described by writers of those days. But, perhaps, the most interesting monument of all, is the ancient harp still preserved in Trinity College, Dublin, which, of course, affords the strongest testimony on this subject, as it is capable of "speaking for itself." It gives us an accurate illustration of the state of the instrument about the earlier part of the fourteenth century, as also the skill of the artificer of that period. This instrument has been long popularly known as being Brian Boru's harp, but its history is now more clearly traced. It belonged to the illustrious sept of O'Neil; and it is an interesting circumstance in the history of this harp, that the last minstrel who "revived its soft chords" was descended from the same royal race to whom it originally owed its existence, for the celebrated Arthur O'Neil awoke its dormant harmonies at Limerick in 1760.

It is of the smaller class of instruments used by the ecclesiastics to accompany their psalmody, as would appear from the sacred monogram adopted about that period, the letters I.H.S. being carved in black letter on it. Harps of this kind are represented on the knees of ecclesiastics in the sculptured monuments and ancient stone crosses of the eighth, ninth, and subsequent centuries.

It most probably was made for one of the two O'Neils who flourished in the fourteenth century, one as bishop of Clogher, and the other as bishop of Derry. "As a specimen of the harp in use among our early ecclesias-

tics, it will be impossible to avoid regarding it as a most interesting and valuable remain;" and I cordially join in the hope, that every care will be taken to preserve from decay "this truly national monument of antiquity."

This harp has one row of thirty strings; it is thirty-two inches high, and of "exquisite workmanship;" the harmonic curved bar is ornamented with silver, chiselled, and well wrought; the knobs and other parts of the instrument are ornamented with silver, and gilt escutcheons; the four sound-holes were also ornamented with metal, which became the object of theft. All seems to have been finished with care by an expert artist, and it attests the high state of the ornamental arts in Ireland at this period. The form of this beautiful instrument presents a peculiar elegance of symmetry, which must strike the eye of an artist.

In the reign of Henry the Eighth, the Irish harp was assumed as the national arms, and by him adopted on the coins.

We may, therefore, take this harp, called Brian Boru's, as the model, as to form, of the Irish harp down to the seventeenth century; and from this linked series of dates, it is seen, that from A.D. 1621, when the magnificent so-called Dallway harp was constructed, back to the Anglo-Norman invasion, 1180, the Irish were in possession of a harp of sufficient power and compass to perform those airs "with appropriate basses,"* and to produce those instrumental effects, so highly eulogised by Cambrensis and other writers.†

* Petrie.

† The first contrivance to alter the semitones with the feet, *i. e.*

The term *Clar-seach* is a synonyme for the more antique name of *Cruit*, which is usually found in our annals; and these names were employed long before the time of Cambrensis. In the ecclesiastical writings, this instrument is called the *Cithera;* performers on the harp were designated the *Cruitirè*, *Clarseachair*, or *Citharista.*

The celebrated harpist Thaddeus O'Coffey, who lived early in the seventeenth century, is thus addressed by the historian Keating:—

"Who is the artist by whom the harp (Cruit) is played: by whom the anguish of the envenomed spear's wound is healed: through the sweet voiced sound of the sounding board, (clar,) like the sweet streamed peal ot the organ?"

And I may here observe, *en passant*, that the harp had never borne the Teutonic name of *Hearpa* among the ancient Irish, a fact rather indicative as to its derivation.

Taking the harp in Trinity College as the model of the Irish harp, Mr. Beauford has given us the solutions of some interesting mathematical problems, by which he demonstrates, that this harp was constructed on the true principles of harmonic science. He observes, that "the Irish bards in particular, seem, from experience derived from practice, to have discovered the true musical figure of the harp, a form which will, on examination, be found to have been constructed on true harmonic principles, and to bear the strictest mathematical and philosophic

pedals, was about 1720, on the Continent, and in later times improved by Seb. Erard.

scrutiny." It is most probable, that the original form of the harp was, like that of the Phrygians, a right angled triangle, and, as music became more developed in Europe, this form not affording facilities for the addition of strings, the right angle was succeeded by the oblique angle, to give a curvature to the arm.

2. The *Keirnine*, or small harp, (so translated by Colonel Vallancey,) supposed to be sacred to Karneois or Apollo, called in the Irish language *Granneus*. The Arabic word *keren* means the sun's rays, with which, agreeably to the fanciful poetical idea, Apollo's lute was strung. Hence the poetic name of "Apollo's golden hair" being given to the sun's rays. Thus, Shakspeare says—

> "As sweet and musical
> As bright Apollo's lute, strung with his hair."*

The Persian *Kanun*, a species of dulcimer, resembled the keirnine, according to Colonel Vallancey, who seems to give this opinion from the linguistic affinity of the terms; how far the instruments might be alike, I will not undertake to say.

3. The *Coinar Cruit* had ten strings, and was played upon with a bow, or plectrum, and is supposed by Beauford to have resembled the Hashur of the Hebrews, to which such frequent allusion is made in the Psalms. "It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most High, upon an *instrument of ten strings*, and upon the psaltery." Don Calmet gives it the figure of the capital Delta (Δ) of the

* Love's Labour Lost.

Greeks, like the primitive form of the Clar-seach. The Coinar Cruit was the Canora Cythara of the mediæval times, and the origin of the modern guitar.

4. The *Creamhtine Cruit* (the Cruth of the Welsh) had six strings, four of which were passed over a bridge and along a finger-board, and might be termed symphonic; the other two lower strings were extended beyond the finger-board, and were occasionally touched by the thumb, as a bass tonal accompaniment to the other strings. This is supposed to be the parent of the present elegant violin species. It was used on festive occasions, as an accompaniment to the harp, similarly to the practice in France, in early times, thus described by the ancient French poet:—

"Quand les tables otèes furent
C'il jugleour in pies esturent
S'ont viols et harpes prises
Chansons, sons, vers et reprises,
Et de gestes, chantè nos ont." *

"When the cloth was ta'en away,
Minstrels strait began to play;
And while harps and viols join,
Raptured bards in strains divine
Loud the trembling arches rung
With the noble deeds we sung."

From the frequent intercourse of the Scots and the Welsh with the Irish, an acquaintance with these instruments became general amongst the former, while the character and physical temperament of the latter adapted

* Dr. Burney.

them to the more devoted cultivation of these instruments.

Notice of the bagpipe and other musical instruments used by the Irish, will be resumed in the second part.

Having thus far glanced at the earlier history of the Irish bards, whose influence in the state, and power to awaken or control the feelings, was so great; having alluded to the progress of music as allied to the purposes of Divine worship, and to the cultivation of the antique ecclesiastical music, with the practice of the harp by the ecclesiastics of Ireland; and having also adverted to the beauty, originality, and expression of our national melodies, which seem to possess all that oriental freshness, so characteristic of such more simple and natural conceptions;—we may admit from those considerations, that music was cultivated to a considerable extent in this "land of song," and that the no very measured praises of Cambrensis (and other subsequent writers) of the skill of the harpists, and their music, were not quite without cause; and as these harpists had their system of instrumental music distinct from, and prior to, that developed on the Continent, they had, most probably, a practical acquaintance with the more simple form of counterpoint, or harmony, which would be suggested by the nature and capabilities of the harp, whose linked sweetness would be drawn forth with both hands. On this subject we shall see the remarks of Cambrensis, as quoted in the second part, and which fully accord with the above conclusion. Further observations I may reserve for the next portion of this essay.

PART II.

CHAPTER XIII.

MUSIC DURING THE MEDIÆVAL ERA.

From what has been already said in the former part of this essay, as to the early acquaintance of the Irish people with the charms of music, the degree of practical skill which they had attained, to which I have alluded from historical evidence, as corroborated by monumental remains, and also by the paramount and more direct evidence afforded by those beautiful melodies themselves, which, in a language peculiarly their own, would seem to address their soft accents to the heart; and their pathetic or more festive strains would naturally suggest to us, that those who first gave expression to this exquisite language of "sweet song," must not have been wholly devoid of those higher emotions of the heart, or those more refined sensibilities which seem to emanate from intellectual culture. From these considerations, I am inclined to think that few will hesitate to concur in the opinion of our historians generally, that Ireland was at an early period not only the sanctuary of religion,

and the seat of learning in the West, but also the repository of the fine arts, of which not the least interesting was the art of music; and we may add, that as in ancient days Erin was styled the "Island of Saints" (Insula Sanctorum) she was, with perhaps not less justice, called the "Land of Song" by our bardic writers. And we find that the wild sweetness of her Celtic melody has been felt, and its thrilling effects have been admitted by all whose ears have drunk of this melodial liquid sweetness, and whose terms of praise seem to indicate the amount of pleasure derived from these strains. But that which appears to me to be the greatest of the merits of this melodial music of Ireland, is found in the fact, that these melodies seem to have afforded delight to the most accomplished musicians in Europe of the past centuries, and they continue to do so even to a greater extent in the present time, for we find the genius of those great masters exercised in harmonising or arranging our melodies; and in the greater number of instances these airs form themes for some of the most elaborate compositions of those artists, in which these melodies resemble the emerald set in ornaments of elaborate treatment, and wrought in fanciful design.

Reverting from this short episode on our music, I may observe, that the musical taste which was thus gradually cultivated by nearly all classes, tended to soften the habits of the people, to repress the ruder passions, and to subdue the harsher dissonances of our nature. The people having been accustomed from the earliest times to listen to the stirring strains of the bards, and from

the general aptitude of the former for music, added to a quick and exuberant temperament, the exclusive cultivation of music was not long confined to the care of the bardic order alone, as we are told by the learned antiquarian Walker "that every hero and every virgin could touch the harp." And when at "the feast of shells" this instrument was handed round, so that each one of the company might modulate his voice to its soft tones in turn, "not to be capable of sweeping it in a masterly manner," continues our author, "was deemed a disgrace even to royalty."

In like manner, music was considered among the Greeks not only as an accomplishment but as an essential part of manly education. In Pindar's first Olympic ode, Hiero is described as taking down his lyre from "the glittering nail" to perform on it at an entertainment. Numerous instances might be quoted to this effect. We learn, also, from Percy* that the practice was the same amongst the Anglo-Saxons and the Welsh.

We find that the finer arts were cultivated to a greater extent by the ancient Irish than the more useful arts; which latter were not, however, neglected by this people, who, as it appears, possessed so much intelligence at that comparatively early period, ere yet modern science had diffused its intellectual ray.

The general cultivation above alluded to is also sustained by the remark of O'Halloran, who says, that "in every house there was one or two harps free to all tra-

* Percy's Essay on the Ancient English Minstrels.

vellers, who were the more caressed the more they excelled in music."

In allusion to which practice, the beautiful lines of the "Bard of Erin," Moore, present an elegant illustration.

The poet-bard thus makes his bequest—

> "When the light of my song is o'er,
> Then take my harp to your ancient hall;
> Hang it up at that friendly door
> Where weary travellers love to call.
> Then if some bard, who roams forsaken,
> Revive its soft notes in passing along,
> Oh! let one thought of its master waken
> Your warmest smile for the child of song."

The degree of attention thus evidently paid to the cultivation of the musical art, evinces a proof of a much higher degree of social refinement and intelligence than has been allowed them by those who are not so conversant with the history or character of that people. "If a man naturally rough," observes an intelligent writer, "becomes softened *for the time* by music, if those *times* are continually renewed, habit will take the place of nature, and that man's character will, to a certain degree, change."* The Grecian legislators were well aware of this softening influence of music over the passions of their people, and they made use of its power to counteract the effects of a sterile soil. "Tous les Arcadiens," observes the learned Abbé Winckelmann,

* Sherlock's Letters.

"etoint obligès par leurs loix d'apprendre la musique et de l'exercer constammentjusqu' á leur trentieme annèe. Le but de cette loi ètoit de *rendre les ames plus humaines et les mœurs plus douces.* Le lêgislateur avait jugè, que sans cette prècaution, la duretè naturelle d'un sol montagneux auroit passè jusques dans les ames. Le succès prouva la bontè du remede. Les Arcadiens ètoient les plus polis, et les plus sincere de tous les Grecs."*

> " But you, Arcadians, deign (sad Gallus cried)
> To sing my sorrows on each mountain side ;
> You, only, of the poet's art possest,
> And softly, sweetly, will my relics rest,
> If by your simple reeds my suffering be exprest."
>
> VIRGIL, ECLOGUE."

Thus we see the practice of music was rendered obligatory, until the age of thirty years, to "humanise the soul, and to soften the manners." "The Arcadians were the most polished and sincere people amongst the Greeks." In the Egyptian and Chinese temples music was also used for similar purposes, "pour modirer et adoucir l'imagination dèrèglèe de leur peuple"†—a custom which was, however, censured by Diodorus Siculus, as being, in his opinion, calculated to enervate the soul, as wrestling enervates the body. "But," observes Mr. Walker, "the heroism of the Irish, through every period of their history, is an illustrious proof that music may soften without enervating the soul."

* L'Histoire de l'Art.

† Recherches Philosophiques sur les Egyptiens et Chinois.

Some idea of the state of music amongst the ancient Irish may be formed by referring to the former chapters, on—1st, church music; 2nd, the genius of the Irish language for musical modulation; 3rd, the characteristic features of the Irish music; and the harp, and our harp musical notation, already spoken of in the latter chapters of the first part.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE BAGPIPE AND OTHER MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

HAVING already spoken of the national instrument, the harp, it may not be uninteresting to offer here a few remarks on the other musical instruments used by the Irish. Of these the Bagpipe claims our notice. It is of the *pneumatic* species; and in its simplest and primitive form, this instrument may be described as a perforated tube, with a vibrating reed inserted at the top like the oboe, but the "vocal breath" is given from an air-bag which is supplied by a small bellows placed on the opposite arm. This instrument is certainly of high antiquity in Ireland, and is mentioned by many of our historians under different names. The learned Dr. O'Conor informs us that one of the instruments in use amongst the Scots or ancient Irish was the *Adharcaidh Cuil*,* that is, a collection of pipes with a bag, or rather a musical bag; also that the *Rinkey* or a species of field or rustic dance was regulated by the sounds of the *Cuishley Cuil*, supposed to be a more simple species of bagpipe

* Dissertations on Irish History.

than the former, and which was louder, and of a smaller scale.

In the ancient manuscript describing the royal hall of Tamar, as translated and published in the *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis*, the place allotted for the *Cuislinnaigh* is alluded to; philologists consider this term to imply bagpipers. To the present day we hear pipers use the terms "*Bollog-na Cuisli*," the bellows of the Cuisli, or veins of the arm on the inside at the first joint; and as this joint on the outside is called *Ullan*, or Uilean, *i. e.*, elbow, Colonel Vallancey thinks that Ullan pipes and *Cuisli* mean one and the same instrument; from which, perhaps, we have the *woollen*, or *swol'n* bagpipe of Shakespere, to which that poet attributes such ludicrous effects—

"When the bagpipe sings i' th' nose."*

It is difficult now to say what people invented this instrument. Some have ascribed it to the Danes; but we are told by M. Sonnerat that the *Tourti* of the East Indians is a species of bagpipe, "which gives the effect of the bassoon."†

We find, however, that this instrument was known to the Greeks; for on a fine basso relievo of Grecian sculpture, at the palace of Santa Croce, in Rome, a figure is represented as performing on an instrument exactly resembling the bagpipe, called the *Askaulos*, which is denominated the Tibia Utricularius by the Romans.

* Merchant of Venice, Act IV.

† Voyages aux Indes Orientales.

Vossius thought, however, that the noun Utricularius meant a species of hydraulic organ, but he appears to have been mistaken, as a passage in Dion Chrysostom shows. This Greek writer, speaking of Nero, remarks that he played on the *flute*, with a *bladder*, or leathern bag of wind *under his arm*. This exactly describes the bagpipe. The reason ascribed to Nero for preferring the *Tibia Utricularius* is rather comical—"that he might avoid those distortions of the countenance occasioned by the flutes blown by the mouth, and which so greatly disgusted Minerva." One of the coins of Nero's reign represents a figure with the *Tibia Utricularius*, or bagpipe.

Some idea may be formed of the general use of the bagpipe amongst the Greeks and the Romans, by consulting the very erudite dissertation of Signor Canonico Orazio Maccari, of Cortona, on an ancient marble statue of a bagpiper, or "*suanator di cornamusa*," as preserved in the Museum of the Marchese D. Marcello Venuti. In this learned dissertation, the author alludes to the various species of bagpipes, with tubes of different lengths, and of different qualities of tone, and these were played upon by both hands, the fingers being employed to "govern the ventages;" but as to the "eloquence" of the music of this instrument in its primitive state, I will not venture any remarks.

Of the relievo he says, it represents "un pastore di èta giovinale, stante, col pileo Frigio in capo, vestito con due tuniche, l'una dell' altra piu lunga, arrivando la prima interiore fino a' fianchi, e l'altro fino alla meta dello coscie. Nudi sono i piedi, ma due rozze calighe

pastorali cuoprono le gambe, la sinestra delle quali sta piegata sopra la destra. Sostiene egli colla sinistra mano una Tibia Otricolare, volgarumente Fagotta o Piva da noi, Cornemuse dai Francesi chiamata. Molto ben rilevata si scorge la figura dell' otre, ed a questa attacato della parte di sotto un Tubo con tre fori, verso del quale tiene il Pastore la destra mano per regolare con quella l'aria che indi esci dee della compressione dell' otre."

Without extending further remarks on our learned author's essay, I may be allowed to quote the apposite description of the pastoral player on the *cornamusa*, or bagpipe, as given by the same acute writer :—

> "Et cum multifori Tonius cui *Tibia buxo*
> Tandum post epulas, et pocula multicolorem
> Ventriculum sumpsit, buccasque inflare rubentes,
> Incipiens, occulos aperit, ciliisque levatis
> Multotiesque alto flatum e pulmonibus haustum
> Utrem implet, cubito vocem dat Tibia presso,
> Nunc huc, nunc illuc digito saliente."

The introduction of the bagpipe into Britain by the Romans (who owed every thing to the Grecians), has been determined by Mr. Pennant by means of an antique found at Richborough, in Kent—the time is remote but uncertain. But as we have no positive authority as yet as to the first use of this instrument, and as the ancient writers tell us that the northern nations were animated by the *clangor tubarum*, the hypothesis is that the Danes received the instrument from the Caledonians.* From

* In 1785, Colonel Vallancey took extracts from the Minutes of the Antiquarian Society of London for the year 1770, by which it

whom, also, the Irish, from their early frequent intercourse with that people, most probably received this antique instrument, for we do not find it indigenous to the Irish. We in return gave the harp to Scotland. Even in Scotland the early history of the bagpipe is enveloped in obscurity. However, we are told by Aristides Quintilianus that it was used in the Highlands of Scotland at a remote period; and from their martial temperament its exciting sound would have been grateful to them. "Hence their hasty adoption of it on its introduction amongst them by the Romans." Speaking of the instrument, a Scottish writer says, that "it is the voice of uproar and misrule; and the music calculated for it seems to be that of real nature and of rude passion."* In later times, however, the Irish kerns had learned to use the bagpipe for the same purpose as the Caledonian Scot—namely, to rouse the martial energies of the combatants; and in the time of Edward the Third, the Irish kerns, or soldiers, used the bagpipe. This martial instrument was also used by the Lacedemonians, as we are informed by Aulus Gellius.

Mr. Pennant† informs us that the most antique bag-

appears that there are two species of pipes in Lapland, the *sak-pipe* and the *wal-pipe*, the same as the bagpipe. "Should the Scots dispute the invention of this ancient instrument, Mr. Barrington thinks it full as probable that they borrowed it from the Norwegians," as that the Swedes had it from them.

Colonel Vallancey adds his opinion, that the *wal-pipe* of the Finns seems the same as the *mala-pioba* of the Irish, *mala* meaning a bag; meola-chala, the musical bag, (pron. *wala*).

* Robertson's Inquiry into Fine Arts.

† Tours in Scotland.

pipes were supplied with air from the mouth, and were the loudest and "most ear-piercing;" while the others, which are supplied by the small bellows, are of Irish origin. And we find that although the bagpipe was so much cherished and studied by the Caledonians, it never underwent any particular improvements; and it was "reserved for the Irish to take it from the mouth, and to give it its present complicated form." It consists of the air-bag inflated by the small bellows—from the air-trunk *two* large, and one smaller *drones*, or *cronans*, tuned to the fundamental harmony of D, the principal key forming the *chorus* spoken of by Cambrensis. The *chanter* is that tube which is held in the hands, and which "sings" the melody (as its name implies); this is well tuned, having an agreeable quality of tone resembling the oboe; and possessing a complete scale of about two octaves, with all the semitonic intervals well divided. Two other tubes placed laterally together, but so voiced as to produce a series of *thirds* at the upper, and fifths for the lower notes—these combinations are produced by a double row of keys which are played with the wrist of the right hand while fingering the chanter, or with the fingers if they are not otherwise required by the melody. The continuous fundamental drone bass may be stopped at pleasure by a valve, so that the melody may have its appropriate harmonies, or it may also be given simply as an unaccompanied melody. The vibrating motion of all those tubes is simply by a reed, not unlike the oboe; and quality of tone is modified by the application of wax on the reeds to regulate the vibrations.

The *tout ensemble* is not uninteresting to the musician, who will, doubtless, consider the instrument thus attempted to be described as a great improvement on the pipe inflated from the mouth; as from the former may be heard music in *three parts*, or with appropriate harmonies. When Dr. Burney wrote, he spoke of an improved bagpipe as used in Ireland, on which, the learned doctor says, "he heard some of the natives play very well in *two parts* without the drone," which, he believes, "is never attempted in Scotland." "The tone of the lower notes," he continues, "resembles that of the hautbois or clarionet, and the higher notes that of a German flute; and the whole scale of one I heard lately was very well in tune, which has never been the case in any Scots' bagpipe that I have yet heard." Although the harp has always taken precedence as the national instrument of Ireland, *par excellence*, yet the bagpipe has been ever a favourite with the peasantry, as it and the violin have often to "divide the honours" at the rural festivities. Nor am I aware that it was held in more than *mediocre* estimation by other nations, although we find that Pan, one of the inferior Grecian deities,

> "Who first taught the art with waxen tie
> To bind the reeds unequal,"

is usually represented as playing upon it. It was fashionable in Italy during Nero's time, as he was a skilful player on it; but it ultimately fell into disuse again after his decease, and it was committed to the hands of the vulgar. We find, however, that during the plague of Florence in A.D. 1348, as Boccaccio in-

forms us, the ladies and gentlemen who retired from the city, and who "are the relaters of the tales in the Decamarone" amongst other recreations availed themselves of the charms of music to soothe the hours as they fled, by performances on the "lute and viol;" but the *cornamusa*, or bagpipe, is assigned to the hands of a domestic of one of those ladies. Thus they "trip it on the light fantastic toe," "carolling to the sounds of the bagpipe of Tindarus" ("quando al suano della cornamusa di Tindaro, equand d'altri suoni carolando.")

Amongst the acquirements of Chaucer's Miller, he says, that

> "A bagpipe well couth blowe and soune."

Shakspeare, also, with his usual observation of the costume and habits of his characters, introduces a company of bagpipers to play before Othello's palace, in the island of Cyprus, on whom, and their instruments, the clown exercises his wit. He also makes ludicrous allusion to the Lincolnshire bagpipe, in Henry the Fourth, Part I:—

> "Fal.—I am as melancholy as a gib-cat, or a lugg'd bear.
> Hen.—Or an old lion, or a lover's lute.
> Fal.—Yea, or the *drone of Lincolnshire bagpipe*."

The author of Hudibras seems to have entertained no very exalted opinion of this instrument—

> "Then bagpipes of the loudest drones,
> With snuffling, broken-winded tones,

Whose blasts of air, in pockets shut,
Sound filthier than from the gut,
And make a viler noise than swine,
In windy weather when they whine."

Butler must have had the drones of the "Lincolnshire pipe" in his mind when he wrote the above not very complimentary lines.

It was, however, formerly the pastoral instrument of Britain; and we find the shepherd, whom King Alfred visits in disguise, declares that his

"Bagpipes shall
Sound sweetly once a year
In praise of his 'renowned king.'"*

I have already said that the bagpipe was used by the Irish for military purposes, as well as on festive occasions. We find that it was used on the occasion of the treaty of Limerick, in 1691. In Derrick's "Image of Ireland," (London, 1581,) a representation of the Irish piper is given, dressed in the costume of that period, with his pipes supplied with air from the mouth, and as marching at the head of a body of Irish soldiers. This warrior minstrel is represented with "magnificent pipes," and with the flowing sleeves, and the glibb of the native, *alias* the "*merus Hibernicus*." He also carries a sword, in case he should desire to produce "striking effects." However, another plate represents him as slain in the front of battle, with his pipes near him.

It was also used as a military instrument in the fif-

* Evans' Old Ballads.

teenth century, as we find it used by the Irish who accompanied King Edward to Calais, and led by the prior of Kilmainham.

Stanihurst, writing anno 1584, gives an elaborate description of the bagpipe, which then consisted of several pipes of different proportions and sizes, with holes and keys to produce various effects by these means. Galilei, who wrote about the middle of the sixteenth century, speaks of its use amongst the Irish to arouse their martial spirit, or anon to accompany with its wailing tones the funereal procession of the fallen warrior to the "narrow house;" its doleful accents causing the attendant followers to drop the "tributary tear."

It appears from a curious and somewhat ludicrous illustration, that this instrument was known in Ireland in A.D. 1300, as may be inferred by the illuminated initial letter beginning one of the chapters of a manuscript entitled the *Dinseanchus,* or a collection of Irish topography and history, executed and compiled in the above year, as given by Dr. O'Conor. This letter represents a pig gravely occupied in the uncongenial act of playing upon the bagpipes; he presses the bag against his belly with his foreleg, and

> "From his lungs into the bag is blown
> Supply of needful air to feed the growling drone."

This instrument is mentioned in the Irish poems and other writings of various dates, from the tenth to the sixteenth century, under the cognomen of the *Cushlannaig,* or bagpipes.

In the Musurgia of Lucinus, (1536,) this instrument is described as it is at present. The *Sackpfieipe* of the Germans, and the *Musette* of the French, are the bagpipe. The *Chalumeau* of the French is not the bagpipe, as Dr. Burney seems to think, that former instrument being only a single pipe.

I may, however, finally observe, that the Irish bagpipe, in its improved state, has not been deemed unworthy of the ear of royalty; as we are informed that George the Second had a medal struck for an Irish gentleman who gratified his majesty by performing on this instrument; and I have heard, with much interest, the performance of a very clever Irish piper, whose strains were listened to by her Majesty; and although to the minstrel's eye all was a "total eclipse," yet his ear drank the compliments bestowed by the royal auditors. This instrument, however, is falling into disuse, and gives place to others of greater power and more varied effects; and which change seems to be the result of a more general taste for the higher species of music.

THE CEARN OR HORN

Was used in primitive times by the Irish, in connection with the Druidical mystic rites. It was sacred to an inferior deity, named *Ana*, or *Anu*, and was often hung upon the "holy trees" of the groves; and it was also found chained to the large stones which guarded those clear springs of water which were supposed to be under the especial presidency of this Irish deity, *Ana*, the

genius of the fountain. Each sub-Druid was privileged to wear the *Anu*, or horn, of which, it is supposed, he made a musical use in the religious ceremonies; or, like the Druids in Britain, he would probably have used it to summon the people for martial and other purposes.

The horn was also used by the Hebrews in their religious ceremonies; as we find that it was the peculiar office of the sons of Heman, the Levite, "to lift up the horn."*

As to the form and quality of tone of the ancient horn, little is exactly known. Dr. Busby says, "that it was invented by the Egyptians, and passed from them to the Greeks, we cannot doubt. By the former it was designated the *shawm*, and by the latter, *cheras*. It appears that the horns of different animals were used, but chiefly those of the wild goat." The Greeks sometimes joined a horn to the end of the flute, thus giving it the form and name of the *lituus*, or clarion. And we learn from Aristotle's acoustics,† that *loudness* and *clearness* were acquired by the addition of the horn. "*Cornua resonando instrumentorum* sonos reddunt clariores."

Of the *trumpet*, an instrument of the same species as the horn, the Irish had various kinds, namely, the *Stuic*, or *Stoc*, the *Buabhall*, *Beann*, *Adharc*, *Dudag*, *Corna*, and the *Gall-trompa*.

The Stuic, or Stoc, was a large brazen tube, and was literally a "speaking trumpet," through which the Druids spoke from the "tops of our round towers to the

* 1 Chron. xxv. 5.

† As quoted by Bartholinus, (De Tib.)

assembled congregations, announcing the new moon, the quarters,"* and other matters of interest, to the surrounding people.

The trumpet was, doubtless, invented by the Egyptians, although the Hetrurians claim that merit, probably from their constant use of it. Titanus Assyrius says that that people stationed trumpeters in towers on the sea-coast, to watch continually, and to give notice with the trumpet, if any event occurred. This practice seems to coincide with the purposes to which the "deep-toned trumpet" was applied by the Druids of Ireland, (as already alluded to,) through which they addressed the people from the tops of those "round towers of other days," and thus giving "greater volume" and power to the voice.

We find that amongst the Hebrews an inferior order of priesthood alone were employed to blow the trumpets in peace or war. "And the sons of Aaron, the priests, shall blow with the trumpets; and they shall be to you for an ordinance for ever, throughout your generation."† Several *Stocs*, or large trumpets, have been found lately in our bogs, specimens of which may be seen in the Museum of Trinity College, Dublin; and from their dimensions, and their not having a mouthpiece to cause vibration, like the ordinary trumpet, it is considered that they were employed as above stated.

Dr. Molyneux speaks of one as having rings by which

* Walker's Memoirs—*Collec. de Rebus Hib.* But Mr. Petrie's theory as to the use of those interesting architectural remains, seems not to coincide with the use of the trumpet as above named.

† Numbers x. 8.

it was suspended; and Stocs having other styles of workmanship, may be seen represented in the *Collectanea de Rebus Hibernicis.*

Exact descriptions of the Buabhall, the Beann, and the Adharc, have not reached us. We may, however, reasonably suppose that these may have been the names applied to the modifications of the same instrument, under the general term of *corna*, or bugle-horn, whose "cheerful" notes summoned to the chase in earlier days, or was used to arouse the martial energies of combatants in the battle-field. Some idea of the sound of this instrument may be formed from the animated lines of the elegant Dante:—

"Ma io senti sonare un' alto Corno,
Tanto ch' avrebbe ogni tuon fatto fioco,
Che contra se la sua via seguitando
Dirizzo gli occhi miei tutti adun loco;
Dopo la dolorosa rotta, quando
Carlo Magno perdè la santa gesta,
Non sonò si terribilmente Orlando."*

"But now the *trumpet*, terrible afar,
Pour'd through the Stygian world the blast of war;
Not Roland's horn in Roncesvalles' field,
Startled the air with half so loud a strain,
When Gallia's heroes pressed the bloody plain,
And Charlemagne resign'd the lily'd shield."

BOYD.

I need not, perhaps, extend quotations, as to the marvellous powers which Ariosto, Cervantes, and other poets,

* Inferno, Canto 31.

ascribe to the horn. I may, however, remark, that its uses appear to have been varied and not unimportant; as we find it sometimes used as a pledge in transferring inheritances, as in Britain.* And it is supposed that in the earlier ages of Christianity in Ireland, this instrument received a more elegant form and finish, as the custom of using the horn passed from the Druids to the Christian clergy; and Giraldus Cambrensis informs us that St. Patrick had one of these instruments.

The primitive form of the horn was simple; but when the mechanic arts became more practised, it was made of brass, but in the original form. This corna is, most likely, identical with the *crooked cornet* of Pliny. Dr. O'Conor says that the Irish armies (like those of Scotland and England) had distinct horns for each battalion, the sounds of which were different, for the more precise knowledge of the duty required.

But the corna was not always used for martial purposes alone by the Irish; they, in the more convivial hours, quaffed mead from it, like most of the northern people, as noticed by Dr. Warton. This "nectar" seems to have been a poetical beverage, and its effects have been celebrated by the praises of the Irish bards, under the Celtic name of *Miodh* or *Meadh*.

Erin's delightful bard thus alludes to this practice:—

"Hark! the horn of combat calls;
Ere the golden evening falls,
May we pledge that horn in triumph round."†

* Archæologia, vol. iii. Such an instrument may be seen preserved at the York Minster.

† Moore.

We also find that the drinking horn went round on festive occasions in England, in the time of Chaucer :—

"Janus sits by the fire with double berde,
And drinketh of his *bugle-horn* the wine."*

When the trumpet superseded the horn for military uses, the latter was retained as an ornament, especially by those who delighted in the sports of the chase. Thus, while Angelica of Ariosto is consoling the vanquished Saracen, the messenger of Bradamant appears, wearing a horn at his side.

"Mentre costei conforta il Saracino;
Ecco col corno e conla tasca a fianco,
Galopando venir sopra un ronzino
Un Messaggier, che parea afflitto e stanco."†

Shakspere, reflecting the manners of that period, makes blind Lancelot say to Lorenzo, "tell him there's a post come from my master with a *horn* full of news."‡ The habiliments of the hunter was usually as thus described :—

"The youth was clad in forest-green,
With *bugle-horn* so bright."

The elegant and descriptive lines, by Sir Walter Scott, present a graphic illustration of the sporting uses of the

* Frank Tale.
† Orlando Furioso, Canto I.
‡ Merchant of Venice, Act V. 1.

horn. Fitzjames having outstripped his companions in the chase, winds his resounding horn.

"Then through the dell his horn resounds,
From vain pursuit to call the hounds.
Back limped, with slow and crippled pace,
The sulky leaders of the chase;
Close to their master's side they pressed,
With drooping tail and humble crest;
But still the dingle's hollow throat,
Prolonged the swelling bugle-note.
The owlets started from their dream,
The eagles started with a scream,
Round and around the sounds were cast,
Till echo seemed an answering blast."*

In Gothic romance, marvellous powers are attributed to the bugle-horn; such as the breaking with one blast the binding spell of enchantment! It was also usually suspended over the portals of our antique castles—arriving at which, the wearied knight takes it, and blowing a note, on hearing which, the warder, (having ascertained the amicable wishes of the knight,) descends to give him the usual hospitable admittance.

As the fictions of romantic chivalry seemed formed on, and reflect as it were the habits of the past feudal times, we can easily imagine that the bugle-horn, usually suspended at the porch of those "ancient halls," which are now "nodding in their fall," had oft awakened the slumbering echoes of the surrounding vales, over which those remains of ancient greatness now look with melancholy

* The Lady of the Lake—The Chase, 10.

aspect, and would seem to say to the lingering peasant, "we live but in the past."

The improved corno, or horn, in the hands of a practised performer, always occupies an important position in the concerted compositions of the great masters, for the full orchestra of the present developed state of music; and its peculiar and beautiful effects are heard with pleasure, and especially in such compositions as the *Freyschutz*, or "Wild Huntsman" of Weber, or the hunting chorus, by Haydn. Its tones are very effective.

Colonel Vallancey supposes that the *Dudag* was a small shrill trumpet, as the etymology of the term seems to imply; and may have resembled that species of instrument known to the Latins as the *Lituus*, or clarion, formed by the junction of a horn to the flute, or other single tube. The meaning of the term *Dudag*, according to O'Brien, is a trumpet, or horn-pipe. As to its precise shape, we are at a loss to form an accurate idea, as we have no representation of it.*

The *Gall-Trompa* (meaning literally the foreigner's trumpet) was most probably derived from Britain; and it belongs in that case to a later period. Shakspere makes frequent allusion to its martial use in the armies of Britain. I shall quote one of the many passages:—

> "Go to the rude ribs of that antient castle;
> Through the brazen trumpet send the breath of parle
> Into his ruin'd ears, and thus deliver."
>
> *Richard II.* Act iii. s. 3.

* The hornpipe was once in general use in the island of Anglesey.

Our elegant poet, Moore, thus beautifully describes the military use of this instrument:—

"Hark! 'tis the sound that charms
The war-steed's wakening ears!
Oh! many a mother folds her arms
Round her boy-soldier, when that call she hears,
And though her fond heart sink with fears,
Is proud to feel his young pulse bound
With valour's fervor at the sound!"

However the trumpet, in its improved form, fulfils important and more harmonious functions in the modern orchestra, its effects are full of martial energy, and it forms a necessary adjunct to the complete *corps de musique*.

OF PERCUSSIVE INSTRUMENTS.

It appears the Irish were acquainted with the use of the drum, which they derived most probably from the East—about that period when they carried their arms in the army of the Crusaders, to liberate the Holy Sepulchre from the pagans.

Le Clerc considers the drum of oriental invention; and although, from a passage in Euripides, it appears that antiquity had ascribed its invention to the Corybantes, yet there is little doubt of its being of Egyptian origin. It was the *Thoph*, or sistrum, used by the priest in the religious ceremonies of the Egyptians. It was the *Krousma* of the Greeks. Its form was oval, covered with skin, (and beaten with pestle or rod,) always flat, like the *Tambour de Basque*. It was used in the religious ceremonies of the Greeks; and there is abundant proof of its constant use amongst the Jews. David so often

exhorts that people to "praise him (the Most High) on the *well-tuned* cymbals." "Praise him upon the *timbrel*."

The *Crotalum* or *Cymbalum*, and the *Tympanum* were favourite instruments with the Egyptians, Hebrews, and the Greeks.

The *drum* continues to be used, often with sublime effect, as the compositions of the great masters of musical science sufficiently illustrate.

There were other percussive instruments used by the Irish, to which I need not further allude, except to advert briefly to the early use of bells. Small bells were appended to the tunic of the Jewish high priest, and were also used in the religious ceremonies of the Greeks and the Romans, and they were undoubtedly introduced here with Christianity. As to the use of large bells, Sir John Hawkins, on the authority of Polydore Virgil, ascribes their invention to Paulinus, bishop of Nola, about the year 400. But W. Strabo tells us, that in his time (ninth century), large bells were but lately invented. Thus we may not venture to give a higher antiquity to the use of suspended bells in this country, than about the period of peace, after the expulsion of the Danes, when we are told that the Christian clergy converted those antique round towers into steeple-houses or belfries; hence they are called *Clogteach*.*

Bells are often used with peculiar effect on some oc-

* Ecclesiastical history ascribes great powers to these bells—

"Laudo Deum verum, plebum voco conjugo clerum,
Defunctos ploro, pestum fugo, festa decoro.
Funera plango, fulgera frango, Sabbata pango
Excito lentos, dissipo ventos, paco cruentos."

casions in modern music, particularly in the dramatic style; they are then tuned to certain sounds. Bells forming a scale, or regular series of sounds, may be made to *chime* certain melodies.*

Of *Pneumatic instruments,* the *Organ* stands pre-eminently first; it is greatest from its power, variety, and beauty; it is a noble result of human intelligence and artistical ingenuity. I have already alluded to it in the former part of this essay. We find the organ introduced in the church prior to the fourth century; and is thus described in a Greek epigram, supposed to be written by the Emperor Julian (the Apostate), who lived about that period :—

"Reeds I behold, of earth the rigid spoil;
Reeds of a novel growth, and brazen soil;
That not heav'n's wind, but blast mechanic breathe,
From lungs that labour at their roots beneath,
While a skilled artist's nimble fingers bounds
O'er dancing keys, and wakes celestial sounds."

Dr. Busby.

From Julian's epigram, it is inferred that the Greeks invented the wind organ, whence it was derived. At what precise period the organ was introduced to Ireland cannot be determined. By some it is supposed that it became known to us shortly after its invention, as it was generally used in Italy and France in the seventh and eighth centuries, about which period the ecclesiastics of Ireland had frequent intercourse with those countries. We find in the Annals of Ulster, A.D. 814, that the de-

* Eight bells will give 40,320 changes!

"——— those evening bells
How many a tale their music tells," &c.

struction by fire of the organs of Cluaincrema, in Ireland, is recorded. Bede* alludes to the use of the organ in his time, and of which he gives a description. We are informed by Muratori and Mabillon, that it was generally used about the tenth century throughout Christendom. Yet we find no further allusion to this instrument by our ecclesiastical historians, until 1641, when we are told that the choir in the friary of Multifernan (Westmeath,) was sustained by the tones of the organ. Maitland informs us that this instrument was hardly known in Scotland before the time of the first James, who introduced it into the churches in that kingdom. It is scarcely necessary to say that this noble instrument is now generally used throughout Ireland. All churches should, if possible, have an organ to sustain the voices, and to add dignity to the solemn and grave accents of sacred song.† And my desire to have those sublime strains which accompany the ceremonies of religion performed with exalted feeling, and more correct taste, may afford some apology for exhorting all those who direct the public mind to exercise their influence for this purpose, so as to realize the picture of its sublime effects so well given by Milton :—

> " There let the pealing organ blow
> To the full-voic'd choir below,
> In service high, and anthems clear,
> As may with sweetness, through mine ear,
> Dissolve me into ecstacies,
> And bring all heav'n before mine eyes."‡

* Born A.D. 673, died 735.

† Compass, two *manuals* (C C), pedals, pipes, (open or bourdon,) two octaves and a third ; or an organ of greater power, if possible.

‡ Il Penseroso.

THE FLUTE.

The form of the shepherd's pipe, or the *chanter* of the Irish bagpipe, would afford models for the construction of the flute, with only the different mode of producing the vibrations; yet we have no direct record to show that the ancient Irish were acquainted with the flute; and "yet it is highly probable that this instrument, or one of the same nature, was in use amongst them,"* as we know that no nation was more devoted to music in earlier times, and over which its soothing influence was so generally exercised with great effect. But many of our melodies, from their "placid succession of lengthened tones, which swell on the sense, and insinuate themselves into our inmost feelings,"† would seem to be calculated for the human voice (the most perfect instrument) or the flute, which possessed the sustaining power, rather than for the harp.‡ Colonel Vallancey supposes that the Irish *Readan*, *Fideog*, or *Lonloingean*, were different kinds of flutes, or rather "soft recorders," which are yet more simple in their construction, but exceedingly sweet and delicate in the quality of tone; and Hamlet assures Guildenstern how easy it is to play on the recorder—"Govern these

* Walker.

† Webb on Poetry and Music.

‡ I have heard, with much interest, an Irish peasant play many of those melodies on the flute, although he was quite unacquainted with musical notation—nor did he know the names of the notes on the instrument; yet, he gave those airs, especially the dances, with exact rhythm, and with good tone.

ventages with your fingers and thumb, give it breath with your mouth, and it will discourse most eloquent music." *

Shakespere being so observant as to *costume*, it may be conjectured that the recorder was a Danish instrument, as the quotation would lead us to infer; and from the frequent incursions of the Danes to Ireland, they would probably have introduced this instrument to the Irish. But the flute is rather of Grecian origin, as evidence amply testifies; and it is most likely that the Irish received it, like the bagpipe, (through the Caledonian Scots,) from the Romans.

The flageolet is the remaining type of the ancient "*flûte à bec*," (having the embouchure at one end.) The *oblique* flute was revived in Germany, and named the "*flûte traversière*."

The flute has been improved by the Germans, and it forms an indispensable element in the full orchestra.

Having thus hastily noticed some of the principal instruments which have been used amongst us, I will resume the sequel of the historical remarks on our national music in the next chapter.

* Hamlet, Act III.

CHAPTER XV.

THE PROGRESS OF MUSIC DURING THE ELEVENTH AND TWELFTH CENTURIES.

THOSE wise and salutary measures which were enacted under the direction of the great monarch Brian Boru—his establishment of various institutions for the development of literature and science, during the happily prolonged period of peace—gave a considerable impulse to the desire for mental cultivation, the genial influences of which would have extended their effects even beyond those days; but on the death of this venerable monarch,* those valuable institutions had to deplore the loss of their greatest patron; and the fair sun of science became again clouded. The military chieftains having then no foreign foe against whom to exercise their prowess, became impatient of the restraint in which they were held by their respective princes; and the military and chivalrous spirit which at that period was so prevalent throughout Europe, was not less felt in Ireland, and the ardour which thus so generally burned in the breasts of those chieftains was directed to be exercised, perhaps

* He was assassinated in his tent by a party of the vanquished Danes, as they fled the battle-field of Clontarf, A.D. 1014.

not unwisely, in the liberation of the city of Jerusalem from the hands of the infidel. Hence the standard raised by the Crusaders afforded an opportunity to those chivalrous and adventurous spirits, who, tired of those more desirable habits of peace, preferred to seek renown and variety in other climes. Thus we find that many of the Irish princes, with their respective retinues, joined the standard under the guidance of Goffrédo,* with whose forces we find that Tasso enumerates them, although in terms not the most complimentary—

> "Queste de l'alte selve irsuti manda,
> La divisa dal mondo ultima Irlanda."†

> "Leur patric est l'Irlande, qui touche
> Aux dernieres limits du monde."
>
> Le Prince Lebrun.

In allusion to these expeditions to the Holy Sepulchre, Fuller pays a tribute of praise to the music of Ireland. "Yea," he says, "we may well think all the concert in Christendom in this warre could have made no musick if the Irish harp had been wanting."‡ Amidst this general clang of arms—this enthusiasm for martial renown—we need hardly be surprised to find that the sweeter accents of poetry and music would be drowned by the martial tones of the echoing corna, the reverberations of which summoned the more daring spirits of

* Carte's England.
† Gierusalemme Liberata, Canto I.
‡ History of the Holy Warre.

that period to feats of arms. However, the votaries of the muses, and especially of this

> " Blest pair of sirens,
> Voice and verse,"

did not wholly neglect their wonted aspirations; and to music, *par excellence*, her votaries ceased not to pay her their increasing homage. " Soothed by this attention, she sometimes ventured to warble soft strains responsive to her harp," so that although the agreeable influence of song might not have been generally felt, yet the muse still retained her soft voice, and her hand forgot not its wonted touch to " sweep the sounding strings."

Music was in this neglected state of practice at the time when Giraldus Cambrensis, an ecclesiastic and writer, visited Ireland in the suite of Henry II., in the year 1171; and such was the rapture with which he listened to the instrumental music of Erin, that he preferred it to any thing that he had heard in other countries. It may not be uninteresting to quote his own words, as given in Walker's memoirs of the Irish bards:—" In musicis instrumentis commendabilem invenio istuis gentis diligentiam; in quibus, præ omni natione quam vidimus, incomparabiliter est instructa. Non enim in his, sicut in Britannicis (quibus assueti sumus) instrumentis, tarda et morosa est modulatio; verum velox et præceps, suavis tamen en jucunda sonoritas. Mirum, quod in tanta tam præcipiti digitorum rapacitate, musica servatur proportio, et arte per

omnia indemni, inter crispatos modulos, organaque multipliciter intricata, tam suavi velocitate, tam dispari paritate, tam discordi concordia, consona redditur et completur melodio, seu Diatesseron, seu Diapente chordæ concrepent. Semper tamen ab molli incipiunt, et in idem redeunt, ut cuncta sub jucundæ sonoritatis dulcedine compleantur. Tam subiliter modulos intrant et exeunt; sicque sub obtoso grossioris chordæ sonitu, gracilium tinnitus licentiùs ludent, latentùis delectant, lassièviusque, demulcent, ut pars artis maxima videantur, artem velare.*

"The attention of this people to musical instruments, I find worthy of commendation; in which their skill is, beyond comparison, superior to that of any nation I have seen;† for in these the modulation is not slow and solemn, as in the instruments of Britain, to which we are accustomed, but the sounds are rapid and precipitate, yet at the same time sweet and pleasing. It is wonderful how, in such rapidity of the fingers, the musical proportions are preserved, and, by their art, faultless throughout, in the midst of their complicated modulations, and most intricate arrangement of notes, by a rapidity so sweet, a regularity so irregular, a concord so discordant, the melody is rendered harmonious and perfect, whether the chords of the Diatessaron or Diapente are struck together; yet they always begin in a soft mood, and end in the same, that all may be perfected in the sweetness of delicious sound. They enter on, and

* Topographia Hibernia, Distinct, iii. c. 11.

† He had spent some years on the Continent.

again leave their modulations with so much subtility, and the tinglings of the small strings sport with so much freedom under the deep notes of the bass, delight with so much delicacy, and sooth so softly, that the excellence of their art seeems to lie in concealing it."

Such were the impressions which our music made on this Welsh writer, the effects of which he so much eulogizes ; and it may also be borne in mind, that instrumental music was thus cultivated in Ireland, at a period when those important improvements which formed the basis of our present continental musical system, were not as yet fully developed. The adoption of parallel lines, by the Abbot Guido of Tuscany, took place in the eleventh century ; and the subsequent invention of the time-table, (from which we had the *Cantus Mensurabilis*, or measured singing,) was not as yet developed. Hence it appears to me that from these, and the reasons already given in a former chapter, that the Irish harpists had their musical system in practice previous to, and independent of the continental system of vocal music.

To the modern musician, the above description of our musical effects may seem not sufficiently accurate ; but he could not reasonably expect technical accuracy in a writer of that period, ere yet our system, by which we analyze his description, was formed : and again, what historians of our present time could write on musical matters with such technical accuracy as to satisfy the critical scrutiny of the learned musician ? Few, perhaps, although having the assistance of the increased social advancement of the past seven centuries.

Mr. Moore, Erin's most delightful bard, is of opi-

nion that this eulogy of Giraldus is too vague—"too deficient in technical accuracy, to prove that even Giraldus himself knew any thing of the artifice of counterpoint." But while I admit that the eulogium is not precise in terms, as regards modern science, yet few will expect to find in this writer, in the twelfth century, a knowledge of counterpoint or harmony, which had not assumed any thing like a perfect form until the sixteenth century, when the illustrious *Palestrina* laid the basis of our harmonic system; therefore, to expect this technical precision, would be to suppose that Giraldus should have anticipated the development of the science by nearly four centuries. But he describes a certain act—the performance on the harp—in which, he says that "the tinglings of the small strings sport with so much freedom under the deep notes of the bass."* This clearly shows that the *practice* of counterpoint or "note against note," that is, harmony, was known by the Irish harpists of that period. This phrase also necessarily implies the practical application of the time-table, which gave the sounds different relative proportions; this is quite obvious. The "arrangement of notes" he speaks of, by which "the melody is rendered harmonious," would seem to coincide with those remarks which I have ventured on this passage, as it also seems to allude to that peculiar form of melody which I endeavoured to explain in a former chapter, in which the frequent use of consonant intervals is observed, avoiding, as much as possible, dissonant tones.

* In playing the harp, the longer and deeper strings are placed *over* those more acute or shorter strings.

The "chords"—in other words, the strings of the Diatessaron (the fifth), and the Diapente (or fourth intervals of the scale)—are often heard with peculiar and beautiful effect, used either together or in succession, and which constitutes one of those characteristic features of our music, in which we frequently hear passages formed on the fifth and fourth intervals, descending in melodial progression to the tonic or key note.

In the modern use of the term "*chord*"—a combination of many simultaneous sounds—it is obvious two combinations on these two intervals could not be tolerated; the term must mean the "string," as is usually the case in stringed instruments, by the Italian term "corda."

These important intervals, the fifths and fourths, are used by all our classical masters, and such combinations are termed suspended dissonant harmonies. This author says, that our harpists "always begin in a soft mood, and end in the same." This remark would seem to apply to the general structure of our melodies, alluding to a numerous class of which, an able writer in the *Dublin Examiner*, for August, 1816, says, that "for the most part, they are formed of four strains of equal length. The first, soft, pathetic, and subdued; the second, ascends in the scale, and becomes bold, and energetic, and impassioned; the third, a repetition of the second, is sometimes a little varied and more florid, and leads often, by a graceful or melancholy passage, to the fourth, which is always a repetition of the first."*

* Many of the ancient ecclesiastical melodies, (like the Hymn, "*Jesu dulcis memoria*,") coincide with this description.

We cannot well suppose that Giraldus was unacquainted with music, as the phraseology of this passage would sufficiently indicate. He makes use of terms which belonged to the Grecian system; and he would have been rather familiar with the effects of the harp, as in the century preceding his arrival in Ireland, Gruffydth ap Conan, king of North Wales, had "brought over with him from Ireland divers cunning musicians into Wales," so that this instrument was, as it appears, generally practised by the Welsh. The use of those phrases in his eulogy which belonged to the Grecian system, as well as the distinct musical system of our Irish harpists already alluded to, all tend to direct to the oriental derivation of our music,* and to show also that the Irish harpists, who were then the best artists known, were practically acquainted with counterpoint or harmony.† And although Mr. Moore, in a preface to the "Irish melodies," has expressed a doubt as to the knowledge of counterpoint attained by Giraldus, yet, in our accomplished poet's learned *History of Ireland*,‡ he seems to come to the above conclusion on this passage; for he says that this curious passage, which appears, though confusedly, even to imply that the "Irish were acquainted with counterpoint," is prefaced by the declaration that in their music alone does he find any thing to commend in that people, so that

* "It is remarkable that the old chaste Greek melody was lost in refinement, before their other arts had acquired perfection."—Wood—*Essay on Homer.*

† We have no proof that the ancient Greeks knew *harmony*, as we now understand that term.

‡ Page 314, vol. i.

Giraldus need not be deemed a partial eulogist, as the object of his visit was for an opposite purpose, certainly not to flatter the Irish of that period.

While on this part of the subject, I may be allowed to quote another remark from our distinguished poet Moore, who says that "the irregularity of the scale of the Irish (in which, as well as in the music of Scotland, the interval of the fourth was wanting) must have furnished but wild and refractory subjects to the harmonist." Having taken no little interest in examining those more antique specimens of our melodies, I have not been able to discover the scale to be irregular, in its diatonic form of *five* tones and two semitones, although some of those melodies omit the use of certain intervals, some omitting the fourth, others the seventh intervals of the scale, as explained in a former part; but these omissions would have been at the will of the performer, or to suit the temperament or tune of the harp.

But we have already seen that the ecclesiastical musical modes were introduced here with Christianity, and derived from the East—the *octachord* of Pythagoras was a complete scale of eight sounds. We know that the *toni ecclesiastici* were formed on a complete scale. The Ambrosian system comprised a complete series of tones; and the venerable Ambrosian "*Te Deum*"—one of the most antique church compositions extant—is formed on a perfect diatonic scale. The grave and ancient melody of the "Dies iræ" employs a compass of ten sounds—a rather extensive register for the voice in those earlier days. We have seen that the ecclesiastics of Ireland were devoted to the study of music, and that they ac-

companied the voice in those hymns and canticles with the sounds of the harp; and as Dr. Burney justly remarks, that sacred music exercised much influence in forming the taste, we may conclude that the secular music was founded on, and partook of, to some extent, the character of the sacred music of those days. And this view is the more perceptible from the marked similarity and coincidence of many of the melodies of each class—not merely as to the modes, or species of scale, which was denominated according to the position of the semitones, but also in the resemblance of their more minute forms. The "Dies iræ" at once reminds us of the old Irish airs in the Phrygian mode. In those ancient scales or modes, *one* only would resemble our modern diatonic major mode—all the others are little understood by ears trained to modern music. Hence melodies in these latter modes would not be quite familiar to our modern tastes. From these reasons I should conclude that from the antique forms of many of our melodies, they are of higher antiquity than has been ascribed to them,* as we find that those of known and more modern date are different in melodial form; all of which, generally speaking, present no more difficulties to the learned harmonist than the adoption of a more antique form of treatment for our more ancient airs; while those melodies of a less remote date are peculiarly

* "And, perhaps, we may look no farther than the last disgraceful century for the origin of most of those wild and melancholy strains which were at once the offspring and the solace of grief, and which were applied to the mind, as music was formerly to the body: 'de cantare loca dolentia.'"—*Preface to Moore's Melodies.*

susceptible of some of the most charming effects, by the application of modern science. This position is illustrated by the use which the great masters have made of these melodies in their compositions. It has been remarked that the use of what are termed consecutive fifths is another peculiarity to our music. This I have not been able to discover—the musical rule in prohibition of *perfect fifths* in succession is justly enforced, as such a progression gives portions of two simultaneous scales. A melody cannot be in two scales at the same instant, therefore this principle should be enforced. The Irish melodies require no relaxation of it, although, in the words of an acute critic, "national tunes are exempt from rules of art, and preserve their nationality only by an inviolable observance of their original characteristics. The rude pibroch, divested of its redundancy of *petites* notes, 'twists and turns,' would cease to be a pibroch; whilst a sentimental national ballad, like 'The Last Rose of Summer,' is capable of being given according to the modern taste, without despoiling it of any of its ancient *broderie*. The latter melody we have heard played by a foreigner, so divested of its appoggiaturas (*i. e.* 'grace notes') as to fall flat on the ear, thoroughly disguised, arising simply from an erroneous idea of its real character."* These remarks apply to the style of delivery of the music—in other words, to taste; but our melodies do not require, to be exempt from the application of such a fundamental principle as that

* Musical Union, No. 6, 1845.

of the prohibition of perfect consecutive fifths, except under certain restrictions.

The *diesis*, or enharmonic interval of the Greeks, could have been but of little real use to the ancients. From it, however, modern musicians have formed the *enharmonic* modulation, or *change*, by which the signature of the harmony is *altered* to the *eye*, whilst the sounds remain the *same* to the *ear*. Although the sound used as D ♯ is different in the theory of Acoustics to the E ♭, yet they are required to be identical in practice.* Hence the change in *writing* D ♯ into E ♭ is termed *enharmonic*, but the only beauty consists in change of the harmony. I have thus entered into remarks which may be generally uninteresting, but which may assist, however, in forming some idea of these interesting matters of musical science, to which Mr. Moore refers in the preface to his elegant Irish melodies.

* Although theoretically D ♯ and E ♭ are not the same pitch, practice requires them to be the same *sound;* but the voice, and the good violinist, will make D ♯ higher, or more acute, than E ♭. This involves the beautiful art of *temperament*, or tune.

CHAPTER XVI.

MUSIC DURING THE MIDDLE AGES.

In order to duly appreciate the amount of attention bestowed on the practice of music in Ireland at this period, it may not be uninteresting to glance at its progress in Italy, as it was only from that genial clime that the faint light of science dawned upon the more sombre gloom of Northern Europe. To the genius of *Guido* Aretinus, abbot of Arezzo, in Tuscany, we owe the first rays of that light of musical science, which is now the delight of all polished people—to him we owe the invention of the first idea of harmony, or counterpoint.

The ecclesiastical music of St. Ambrose, and the pontiff Gregory the Great, remained unchanged until the eleventh century, when Guido published rules for the more correct singing of the *Gregorian* or plain chant. He arranged the *Hexachord* or scale of six notes, to which he applied the syllables, ut,* re, mi, fa, sol, la, which respectively formed the beginning of each hemistich of the hymn by Paulus Diaconus, to St. John

* The modern French use *do* instead of *ut*, a change now generally adopted.

the Baptist. He arranged the *staff*, or parallel lines, on which he wrote the *points*, or musical notes; their sound was indicated by certain letters placed at the beginning of the *staff*, which were called *cleffs*, from "*claves signatæ*," and served as "*keys*" to the name and sound of each note or musical point.

His cotemporary, Sigebert, a monk of Gemblours, writing about A.D. 1028, says that he excelled all his predecessors. "By his method, children were taught to sing new melodies with more facility, than by the voice of the master, or the use of an instrument; for by only affixing six letters, or syllables, to six sounds (all that music admits of *regularly*), and distinguishing these sounds by the fingers of the left hand, their distances ascending and descending through the whole diapason, are clearly presented, both to the eye and the ear."

Kircher tells us that Guido's method was speedily adopted by the clergy of other countries; and the authors of the *Histoire Litteraire de la France* inform us that it was received in that country. Guido was invited to Rome by the pontiffs Benedict the Eighth, and John, his successor.

In the supplement, by Carpentier, to the Latin Glossary of Du Cange, (art. *Gamma*,) the learned writer quotes the following passage from the *Chronicle of Tours*, An. 1033:—

"Guido Aretine, a wonderful musician, flourished in Italy, about this time. He constructed the gamut, and rules for singing, by applying those names to the six sounds, which are now universally used in music; for before practitioners had no other guide than habit and ear."

This important improvement of Guido, led to the practice of "simple counterpoint," or "note against note," in which the canto fermo, or Gregorian plain chant, would have the simplest harmony, consisting of notes in equal lengths—the time of the melody being determined by the accent or length of the syllables. But the development of the *time-table*, or the "cantus mensurabilis," was the next necessary and important step towards forming the basis of our present musical notation, which no longer depends on the poetical accents for its rhythmical proportion.

The formation of the *time-table* is ascribed to *Franco*, of Cologne, who wrote the work entitled, "*Franconis, Musica et Cantus Mensurabilis.*" This system of measured singing formed the basis of the proportional notation now used, by which the length, quantity, or duration of the sound, was indicated by the *form* of the musical note; so that the *sound* and its proportionate *length* were indicated by this notation formed by Guido and Franco,* and which was subsequently improved by John de Muris, who flourished early in the fourteenth century, and who added other characters to the time table. But it was reserved for the genius of the "illustrious" Palestrina, who flourished in the sixteenth century, to place the harmonic science on its true basis. To him music was indebted for a very important step towards its development; he imparted to the melodial figures a more definite form, and an elegance combined

* Franco lived about the early part of the thirteenth century. Walter of Evesham, a Benedictine monk, was another learned benefactor to the progress of music, rather subsequent to this period.

with dignified expression, which character extended to each individual part of the harmony, which thus tended to produce those sublime effects—those grave and expressive harmonic forms which belong to the pure ecclesiastical style. His genius penetrated beyond his time. He was appointed master of the choir of St. Peter's at Rome.

Having thus glanced at the progressive development of music in Italy, I may remark, in reverting to our former subject, that the time-table had not been arranged for some centuries after the time when Giraldus describes the Irish harpists ; during whose performance, he says, that "the small strings sport with so much freedom under the deep notes of the bass."* Thus we find that they were familiar with the use of notes of different proportions, as the musician will perceive. This quotation comprises even more than is ascribed to Guido, namely, an extended scale of sounds—the use of both hands to touch the strings—thus producing a species of harmony. We are therefore led to the former conclusion, that the *practice* of the *time-table,* or the use of notes of unequal duration, must have been known to the Irish harpists previous to its development on the Continent, and also that they were practically acquainted with harmony or counterpoint.

It may not be out of place to observe here, that in the eleventh century, such was the celebrity of the Irish music, that the Welsh received their improved musical system from the "land of song"—Ireland.

Powel observes, that "Gruffydth ap Conan, (king of

* See a former chapter.

North Wales,) brought over with him from Ireland divers cunning musicians into Wales, who," he formally asserts, "devised, in a manner, all the instrumental music that is now there used; as appeareth, as well by the bookes written of the same, as also by the names of the tunes and measures used among them to this daie."*

The assertion of the historian Powel, is supported by the learned Selden, who says, "that their musique," speaking of the Welsh, "for the most part came out of Ireland with Gruffydth ap Conan, prince of North Wales, about king Stephen's time."† Caradoc affirms, that the Welsh received the harp from the Irish.

In 1176, a great feast was given at the castle of Cardigan, by Rhys ap Gruffydth, to which all the bards and poets of Wales were invited; so that the Irish bards had not been long in Wales, when an opportunity presented itself for a display of their practice in the musical art. Here musical and poetical contests were held, "in which the bards of North Wales, amongst whom, it is natural to suppose, our countrymen were pre-eminent, won the prizes."‡

A congress or re-union of these musical masters of that period was held by Gruffydth ap Conan, for the reformation of abuses amongst the Welsh minstrels, and for the purpose of taking further steps for the more correct development of the art. At this assembly, the

* History of Cambria, edit. 1584.

† Notes on Drayton's Polyolbion.

‡ Wynne's His. Wales; Lyttleton's His. of Henry the Second, as quoted by the learned Walker.

Welsh tunes were collected, and transmitted to their present notation, as exhibited in the collection spoken of by Dr. Burney, and preserved by the late Mr. Morris, of the Tower of London. And Mr. Walker observes, that "as this congress, we may conclude, consisted principally of the *cunning musicians brought over from Ireland into Wales*, we may hence infer, that the notation of the music then settled, was afforded by those musicians, they having been said *to have devised, in a manner, at this time, all the instrumental music of the Welsh*. As this notation must have arrived gradually even to the rude state in which we find it, and as the tunes which it has been the means of preserving, are set in full harmony for the harp," (according to Dr. Burney,) "we may venture to assert, that the Irish had been long in possession of musical characters, and of a slight knowledge of counterpoint;" for both of which, Mr. Walker thinks they may have been indebted to the Greeks. On this part of the subject, I may, however, refer to the preceding chapter, and remark *en passant*, that there is some diversity of opinion as to whether the ancient Greeks knew harmony or counterpoint, as we understand these terms, or not. I rather think that the merit of its development must be ceded to our modern theorists.

However, there is direct proof of our claim as having afforded the notation to the Welsh music of that period as above-mentioned—that is, a psalm tune in the same notation as above-named, and which musical antique curiosity was presented to Mr. Beauford, by a reverend gentleman who took it from a MS. *Missal* which had

remained for centuries in the possession of one of our Celtic families. Mr. Beauford remarks, that the psalm tune is written for the cruit or psaltery, and seems to have been a species of notation for ecclesiastical uses. And while he asserts that the Welsh notation given by Dr. Burney does not appear older, yet he is of opinion that "neither of them are the aboriginal characters of the bards." On this part of the subject, I may refer to a former chapter on the musical system of our harpers.

Agreeably to the account as given above by the archæologists of Wales, I may also add the evidences afforded by the linguistic similitude of the Welsh musical nomenclature to that of the Irish. The Welsh system of musical phraseology is nearly all purely Irish, thus clearly indicating the origin of their system.

In some remarks on the air, "*Chant o' Bunnan*" (three hundred pounds), the acute editors of the *Harmonicon*, (a work of much musical interest,) thus allude to our music and its influence in Wales:—"The Welsh have very few native airs; most of those ascribed to them are of Irish origin; and we deceive ourselves if the above be not amongst the latter, for it possesses all the tenderness that characterises the melodies of unfortunate Erin; and is devoid of that uncouthness, which, with three or four exceptions, mark those of the more happy Cambria."*

* Vol. v., 1827. Gardiner says, that Britain received the harp from Ireland, through Wales; and he reasonably concludes, that this instrument "was originally brought to Ireland by the Phœnicians."—*Music of Nature;* London, 1843.

Before proceeding further, it may not be misplaced here to remark, that as the Caledonian-Scots, and the Iberno-Scots of Ireland, were so much identified in the earlier days, we find that the music of the Irish was introduced amongst the Scots of North Britain. One or two quotations will be sufficient on this subject.

Dr. Campbell confidently asserts that the honour of inventing Scots' music must be given to Ireland.* He further says, that "relative to the distinguished excellence of the Irish musicians, particularly in ancient times, it will not, I flatter myself, be difficult to trace the origin of what is now called, and justly enough, the *Scots'* music. We have seen that there is proof positive, from their own chronicles, that the Welsh received their instrumental music from Ireland—let us now see whether there be not proof presumptive, the strongest the nature of the thing is capable of, that the British Scots *borrowed* their music from the same quarter.

"It is vain to say, as is generally said, that David Rizzio was author of the Scots' music; there is an internal evidence against such a supposition. The wild and pastoral singularity of the Scots' melodies is incompatible with the grave and learned compositions of Italy. And there is external evidence still more strong—Rizzio was secretary, not musician, to the queen of Scotland. His father had been a musician by profession, but we do not find that he was such himself.

"That he might, however, have played and collected the Scots' airs, is very probable; but that a young dissipated

* Philosophical Survey of Ireland, Letter 44.

Italian, busied in the intrigues of a court, and attending on a queen so fair as Mary, could in a few years have disseminated such multifarious compositions through a nation which despised his manners and hated his person, *is utterly incredible.*"*

Dr. Oliver Goldsmith is inclined, on the contrary, to think that Rizzio's skill in music had some considerable influence on the Scots' music. And the learned doctor, in support of his hypothesis, which had been objected to, quotes the opinion of the "melodious Geminiani" (pupil of the celebrated Corelli), that we have in these countries "no original music except the Irish."

I rather think that the Scotch music may be divided into two classes—the melodies which are preserved in the Highlands as performed on the pibroch or bagpipe, such as those rustic dances, and the clan or gathering tunes; also those other antique Celtic melodies which continue to be sung in the Highlands to Irish poetry or words,† and which preserve their wild sweetness and characteristic *fraicheur,* and "flow entirely in the Irish manner," as Goldsmith justly remarks. The second class, or species of melody, may be said to belong to the

* Rizzio was brought over from Piedmont, to take charge of a band, by King James the Fifth, an accomplished prince, who was an excellent judge of music, and of other fine arts. He became secretary to the queen, and corresponded with the European powers; he had been twenty years in Scotland at the time of his melancholy assassination.

† John Mayor, a Scottish writer, says expressly, that "it is by many arguments certain, that we owe our origin to the Irish. This we learn of the language, for even at this day (sixteenth century), one-half of Scotland speaks Irish."

Lowland, and which is generally sung in the Anglo-Scotic dialect. These are generally of a more smooth and placid character, which may have been formed probably by the frequent migrations of our harpers to Scotland,* who sometimes remained and received distinction there—bringing with them their music and a practice of the art. These airs will also have been modelled to some extent by the taste of the accomplished monarch James the Fifth, and by Rizzio; and so far from these Lowland melodies being formed after the Italian style, they will be found to possess most of the characteristic features of the Irish melody of that period, so much so that many of them are claimed by both countries.†

In an "Essay on the Influence of Poetry and Music on the Highlanders," the ingenious Scottish author remarks the strong likeness which exists between the Irish songs and Highland *luinigs*, or popular airs; and this observation is founded in fact, and coincides with what I have ventured to advance. We find, also, from a comparison made by the learned Mr. Beauford, between the melodies of both countries, that they are formed on scales nearly alike—namely, the diatonic scale, with the semitones in different positions, thus giving the varied modes of the ancients, as I have shown in a former chapter. Scottish historians give us the key to explain this affinity between the two nations. They

* To which Burns alludes.

† The numerous foreign musicians which King James the First had attached to his choir, at the chapel of Stirling Castle, would have also exercised considerable influence in improving the taste for music.

inform us that while our Irish harpers travelled into Scotland, they diffused their native melodies—"they undoubtedly occasioned a revolution in the musical taste of the country, for the excellence of their performance (they standing at this time unrivalled in their profession) must have excited admiration; and whatever we admire, we are ambitious to imitate."*

The *luinigs* are quaint popular airs, sung by the women at the wheel or the quern, and by the hind at his labour, in order to beguile the time, or to soothe the hours of toil. Labour songs of this species are used in Ireland for a similar purpose. As the ploughman paces the furrowed soil, he whistles the pleasing rural lay, or as the female peasant milks her cow, she warbles a succession of wild notes, "which bid defiance to the rules of composition, yet are inexpressibly sweet;" and which, like those notes warbled by Addison's Amyntor, "though they were a little wild and irregular, they filled every heart with delight."

Without extending these remarks, I will merely observe, that other, and stronger proofs, will appear in the sequel to show the influence which our music exercised on the musical taste of the Scots in the subsequent progress of the art.

* Quoted from Walker's Memoirs.

CHAPTER XVII.

MUSIC DURING THE MIDDLE AGES—CONTINUED.

HAVING now brought down our inquiries to what in the European annals are termed the middle ages, we find that the people of Ireland were far from enjoying the sweets of peace, "the nurse of science," as the sword of the stranger was seldom permitted to rest in the scabbard; and "as the Irish chieftains had to defend their lands from the inroads of those Anglo-Norman invaders who sought to extend their possession of the fair valleys of Erin." Yet under these very uncongenial circumstances, our music and poetry still flourished. We find that although deprived of considerable portions of their lands, harassed by continual warfare, and subdued in spirit, the undying spirit of music still reigned in the bosoms of the people, by whom it was cherished; and so firmly was it implanted in their nature that even the rude hand of strife could not eradicate it, although it might, from their desponding condition, have damped, to some extent, their more fervid aspirations to the tuneful muse.

Mr. Walker says, that "on the revival of literature in the eleventh century, after the conversion of our Norman

enemies, the Irish attempted, ineffectually, to restore things to their former state." The Filean Colleges were re-established, but with less liberal endowments, and with less strict discipline; however, they continued to be supported until the reign of Charles the Second.*

The bardic order was now (eleventh century) divided into two classes—namely, the *ollamh re-seanachs*, and the *ollamh re-dan*.† The former were historians and antiquaries—the office was held by certain families by hereditary right. Of this very numerous class I may name the family of the O'Maolconry, hereditary bards, and historiographers of Connaught, and whose writings form an important part of the ancient literature of Ireland.

O'Maolconaire, or O'Maolconry, anglicised to Conry or Conroy—this family are a branch of the royal line of the Ily Nialls, kings of Meath, descending from Niall, monarch of Ireland, in the fifth century. Hereditary lands were granted to them by the O'Conors, kings of Connaught. The honourable office of bard and historian was held for many centuries by this family—one of the duties of which office was to assist at the inauguration of the kings. Thus, in A.D. 1312, we find Torna O'Maolconry, chief bard to Felim O'Conor, king of Connaught, amongst other duties, standing beside the king; he recited publicly, before the assembled chiefs and clergy, the titles and genealogy of the king—then placing

* The celebrated Donald Mac Firbis studied in the last of these schools, of which Boetius Mac Egan was professor, in the reign of Charles the First; it was kept in Tipperary.

† Dr. O'Conor.

in the hand of the monarch the emblem of sovereignty, he administered the usual oath to preserve the observances of the country.

The Annals of the Four Masters, and our various other histories, give us the name of the O'Maolconrys as eminent bards and historians. Conaig O'Maolconry is the reputed author of the ancient MS. of the eleventh century, called the Book of the O'Maolconrys; also, The Annals of Connaught, a MS. in the possession of Dr. Charles O'Conor, is a history of that province from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, compiled by this family as official historiographers. A beautiful MS. in vellum, folio-size, now in the Bodleian library, Oxford, containing the history, in prose and verse, of Fionn Mac Cumhaill, and the celebrated Finian, heroes of Ireland in the third century, with, also, some of the poems ascribed to Ossian, was composed by one of the O'Maolconrys about the fourteenth century. From the prize essay of Dr. Drummond we learn, that when Mac Pherson, the celebrated editor of Ossian's poems, was shown this Irish MS. on visiting that library, "he could not read a word of it."

Thus we find the exact era of the composition of those poems, which have been ascribed to Ossian, who lived so many centuries before this period. The linguistic forms of these poems would be sufficient to exhibit the correctness of this fact; however, this MS. disposes of the reputed Ossianic poems, compiled by Mac Pherson.

Those bardic writers generally gave their heroes superhuman endowments of strength and stature. Such poetical fictions have been sung and recited at popular

entertainments, and may be still heard amongst our peasantry; and it was from those traditional tales that Mr. Mac Pherson collected his materials—even the appearance of which has excited so much interest and curious speculation in the literary world. Would that the genuine remains of our poetry were given to the light!

If the poetical fictions of those ages should appear not so interesting to the fastidious antiquary, yet, it may not be forgotten, that it is chiefly from such reliques of ancient poetry, we can trace the rise and progress of a national poetry, and illustrate the history and development of the human mind. One of these Ossianic poems, translated by Miss Brookes,* is given in Walker's interesting Bardic Memoirs, and in which Oisin relates to St. Patrick the chivalrous deeds of the Fenii—and proceeding with the narrative, the poet tells us, that

"The feast was for the Fenii spread;
Their chiefs assembled round,
Heard the song rise to praise the dead,
And fed their souls with sound.

"Or on the chequer'd fields of chess,
Their mimic troops bestow'd;
Or round to merit, or distress,
Their ample bounty flow'd."

The Finian king going forth unobserved to breathe the fragrant gale of Almhain's plains, the bounding steps of a doe were traced by his dogs; being pursued,

* Reliques of Ancient Irish Poetry.

she vanished from his sight near Loughshieve—on approaching which the king heard plaintive sounds, and on looking around—

"There he beheld a weeping fair
Upon a bank reclin'd,
In whose fine form and graceful air
Was every charm combin'd.

"On her soft cheek, with tender bloom,
The rose its tint bestow'd;
And in her richer lip's perfume
The ripened berry glow'd.

"Her neck was as the blossom fair,
Or like the cygnet's breast,
With that majestic, graceful air
In snow and softness drest."

The king inquires the cause of this "white-handed mourner's" grief, offering his readiness to remove it.

"'Alas! my ring, for whose dear sake
These ceaseless tears I shed,
Fell from my finger in the lake,'
(The soft-haired virgin said.")

She entreats him to seek it, on which he plunges into the stream, and at length found the ring so prized.

"But when he sought the blooming maid,
Her treasure to restore,
His powers were gone—he scarce could wade
To reach the nearest shore.

"That form where strength and beauty met.
To conquer or engage;
Paid, premature, its mournful debt,
To grey and palsied age."

Being, at length, missed from the feast, the chief is sought by his warriors, and is ultimately discovered in his sadly altered condition on the margin of the lake. On being importuned to explain the cause of the unhappy change—

"'Guillin's fair daughter,' (Finn reply'd,)
'The treacherous snare design'd,
And sent me to yon magic tide,
Her fatal ring to find.'"

Then on their shields they bear the hapless king—

"While each fond chieftain press'd around,
The precious weight to share."

And having borne him into the presence of the enchantress, they oblige her to restore his former vigour.

"A cup quite full she trembling bore
To Erin's alter'd chief,
That could his pristine form restore,
And heal his people's grief.

"He drank—O joy! his former grace,
His former powers return'd;
Again with beauty glow'd his face,
His breast with valour burn'd."

The poem from which the above is taken, then concludes with an account of the extravagant delight of the Finians, on finding the chief restored to his "pristine form" and powers.

This poem was certainly "framed to the harp," as Mr. Walker observes; it is in common ballad metre, and is sung to this day by our Finsgealaithe.

Dr. MacCullagh admits, that "the Irish and Welsh have both a class of music to which the Highlanders have no title, and which no intelligent Scotch musician will claim—these are the melodies belonging to the harp abounding in Ireland." And on this subject Mr. Crosse* (F.S.A., &c.,) remarks, that "the absence of which (harp melodies) in the Highlands, offers a strong argument in favour of the Irish claims to the Ossianic relics."

It has been already observed, that Kohl was interested in hearing some of those tales during his stay in the North of Ireland; and he expresses his pleasure in having had an opportunity of assuring himself, "by oral demonstration, of the existence of Ossianic poetry like this at the present day."

He also says, that while hearing the translations of those poetic fragments, he "was often reminded of Goëthe's Earl King, and of many Russian and Tartar legends of similar import." "I used to fancy," he continues, "that the story of the Earl King was of German origin; but now I rather imagine it to have originated in Ireland, and to have traversed the whole of Europe, terminating in Asia."

Regarding this Ossianic poetry, he says, "that the whole Irish nation, both in the South and North, is certainly much more imbued with the spirit of this

* 1825.

poetry, and still possesses many more traces of it, than the Scottish people, whether of the Highlands or the Lowlands;" and he, therefore, restores our Fin Mac Cumhal, "the Wellington of those days," to his proper sphere, namely, Tara in Meath, the former royal residence.*

* We find that, in all times, poets, and popular fancy, have ascribed unusual powers to certain lakes—as mankind seem delighted "to find their own images in all parts of space." Ancient poets tell us of the descent of mortals into those aqueous abodes. The story of Hylas, as given in the 13th Idyll of Theocritus, is familiar; and also that of Aristæus, told in Virgil's Georgics. Hylas going to fetch water for his messmates, Hercules and Telamon, came to a fountain surrounded by rich and varied herbage.

"The youth his spacious urn held o'er the fount,
Hastening to plunge it in, when all the nymphs
Caught on his arm, for love had clouded o'er
The tender minds of all, love for the charms
Of th' Argian boy, and Hylas headlong fell
Into the clear dark water."

Without extending this note, I may refer to that appended to Crofton Croker's Irish popular legend of "The Enchanted Lake," which shows what the coinciding notions of oriental people are respecting this supposed existence in the subaqueous realms which poetical fancy has created.

The romance writers of later days are not without such fanciful creations. Don Quixote indulges in such notions; and also in the Orlando Furioso, where the gigantic Saracen, not being able to vanquish brave Orlando, caught him in his arms and jumped with him into the lake. In this abode various objects which charm the senses are described as being not unlike the pleasures which delight the fancy in our sublunar abode, but rather more fanciful:—

"La dentro di cristallo era una stanza
Piena di donne, e chi suona, e chi danza.

"Danzavan quelle belle donne intorno,
Cantando insieme con voci amorose,
Nel bel palagio di cristello adorno
Smaltato d'oro, e pietre preziose."

A paper presented to the Royal Irish Academy, in 1805, presents some very interesting parallels between many passages of the continental poets, and those early writings of the Irish bards.

A beautiful episode, similar to that of Armida in Tasso, is quoted from those ancient Irish bards, by Miss Brookes, who is of opinion that Tasso must have found the story in some of the continental legends of a former period.

To pursue this matter further, would lead us beyond the objects of this brief essay. I shall, therefore, resume our subject.

Each province had its hereditary bardic historiographer. One of the O'Maolconrys* wrote a chronological poem, from the time of the monarch Leogaire, A.D. 428, ending at the year 1014.

I may also remark, that another author of this class, Mac Leig, wrote the Anala, or Chogaibh Eiron, which closes with the abdication of Donogh, A.D. 1064.

The *Ollamh-re-Dan*, who may be hereafter designated by the simple term of bards, panegyrists, or rhapsodists, in whom the character of the troubadours would be to

* Some members of this learned family assisted in compiling "the Annals of the Four Masters."† In these "Annals" we find the following events relative to this family recorded:—

"A.D. 1136. Tanaidhe O'Maolconry, a celebrated historian and poet, died, several of whose poems are quoted in O'Reilly's Irish Writers.

"Neide O'Maolconry, another historian of the same family, died.

"A.D. 1266. Thomas O'Maolconry, archdeacon of Tuam; and Maolin O'Maolconry, historiographer of Siol Murray, died.—*Four Masters.*

"A.D. 1270. Tanaidhe More O'Maolconry was appointed chief historiographer

† Which highly-interesting work is now being translated, and published by Mr. Geraghty, of Dublin.

some extent united. Each chief entertained one of these bardic rhapsodists, in his castle, attached to his suite, who entertained the assembled guests with the "songs of other days;" or at the festive board, he evoked the spirit of song, and awakening the slumbering chords of the clar-seach, we can fancy him addressing it in the beautiful lines of our elegant poet—

"Sing, sweet Harp, oh, sing to me,
Some song of ancient days;
Whose sounds in this sad memory,
Long buried dreams shall raise.
Some lay that tells of vanish'd fame,
Whose light once round us shone."

of Connaught; and Dubhsuileach O'Maolconry, and Dunlaing O'Maolconry were removed from that professorship.—*Four Masters.*

"A.D. 1310. Torna O'Maolconry, chief poet and historian of Connaught, attended at the inauguration of Felim O'Conor, and his poems are mentioned in O'Reilly's Irish Writers.

"A.D. 1314. Conaing O'Maolconry, chief poet of Connaught, died.

"A.D. 1385. Tanaidhe O'Maolconry, an eminent poet of Connaught, died.

"A.D. 1404. Donogh O'Maolconry, chief poet of the O'Conors of Connaught, died.

"A.D. 1420. Conaing O'Maolconry, poet of Connaught, died.

"A.D. 1441. Maoilin O'Maolconry, chief poet of Connaught, died.

"A.D. 1446. Tanaidhe O'Maolconry, an eminent poet of Connaught, died.

"A.D. 1511. Carbry O'Maolconry, a famous historian of Connaught, died.

"A.D. 1566. John O'Maolconry, called by the annalists Ard Ollamh Eirionn, or chief poet and historiographer of Ireland, flourished.

"A.D. 1600. Maurice O'Maolconry, an eminent poet of Connaught, died.

"A.D. 1629. Died at Madrid, Florence O'Maolconry, a Franciscan friar, and eminent for his learning, who was the founder of the Irish Franciscan monastery of Louvain, and was also appointed Catholic archbishop of Tuam. It may be observed here that several of the O'Maolconrys were eminent ecclesiastics, and in the beginning of the twelfth century Clarus Mac Maoilin O'Maolconry, archdeacon of Elphin, is often mentioned in these Annals, as the founder of many monasteries.

"A.D. 1701. Peter O'Maolconry, an eminent poet, flourished. Several poems and other works, written by the above-named O'Maolconrys, are given in O'Reilly's Irish Writers."

"The chief representative of this honourable and distinguished family of the O'Maolconrys, is Sir John Conry, Bart., of Arborfield Hall, Berkshire."

Or, occasionally, he varied the theme of his song, which, like some of those narrations in Homer, were founded on imaginative tales, handed down traditionally by the ancient bards. And in other instances, he indulged in sallies of wit, or humorous extemporaneous effusions, founded on the passing events ;* and, as the persons of these bards were inviolable, the satire in which they sometimes freely indulged, had the effect of restraining the nobles in comparative awe and we find that *largesse* was, not unfrequently, bestowed on the bards to keep their "muse in good humour;" thus

"The mirthful moments danc'd along
To Music's charming lore;
And to the sons of lofty song,
Wealth pour'd her bounteous store."

OSSIAN—O'MAOLCONRY.

The following quotation from the History of Ireland,† may serve to illustrate the astonishing influence which these bardic rhymes had over the passions. King Henry the Eighth having summoned the Earl of Kildare as lord lieutenant of Ireland, to answer certain charges brought against him, he entrusted the administration to his son Lord Thomas. Soon after the earl's departure, a report was circulated to the effect, that the earl had been executed in the tower, and that the family were threatened by the vengeance of this "regal tyrant."

* This mirth-provoking custom gave rise to the well-known adage—

"In the hall
Beards wag all."

† By the authors of the Modern Univ. Hist.

This young lord, by the advice of some friends, determined on revenging the injuries of his family. As Cromer, who filled the offices of primate and chancellor, was reasoning with him on the rashness of the intended enterprise, at a council assembled in St. Mary's Abbey, Dublin, Nelan, a bard attached to his suite, instantly chanted forth impassioned praises of Lord Thomas, and in rhymes extolling his greatness, chiding his delay, and calling on him to take immediate revenge in the field ; for the injuries of his family. The effusions of this rhapsodist had the desired effect. They had, as our authors continue to remark, "unhappily a greater influence than the sage counsels of the prelate, and the young Geraldine rushed forth at the head of his Irish train." In addition to his persuasive powers, Nelan, it would appear, exercised those of a jester ; as we find that while the chancellor proceeded with his exhortation, the bard presumed to interrupt him, and to bestow on the young nobleman the appellation of *Silken Thomas*, as his domestics wore livery, richly embroidered with silk.* It is not improbable that the bards in those days were privileged to jest with their patrons—thus occasionally assuming, like the French and English minstrels, the character of buffoon.

At a more early period, we find a place allocated in the royal hall of Teamar or Tara, for the *Cleasamhnaigh*, or jesters, who were then, it appears, a distinct class.

Dr. Busby says, that "the bard, properly so called, was no less a literary than a musical character. His

* Holinshed.

qualifications gave him rank, and his rank recommended his qualifications; so that persons of the very highest orders of society were ambitious to cultivate arts that delighted universally, and threw splendour round their possessors."

It appears that prior to the fifteenth century the lyrical literature of the bards and itinerant poets had begun to revive a taste for music and literature of the metrical species throughout Europe; and those rhyming songsters so abounded in *Provence*, that Nostrodamus (brother to the astrologer of that name) calls it "*the mother of troubadours and minstrels.*" As they celebrated important historic events, and excited a high degree of enthusiasm by their allusions to chivalrous deeds in their rhapsodies, and by the fascinations of the two arts they so well combined, their presence was highly acceptable at the courts of those princely barons, by whom they were treated with respect and consideration.

It is, however, not a little remarkable, that for two centuries after the introduction of the *time-table*, we have no records of the existence of secular music, except the airs preserved by the troubadours, or Provençal poets. Yet, their melodies formed the basis of the secular music of France.

As the Provençal poetry is interesting to literature, so are those melodies to which it was sung interesting to the musician. These productions reflect, as it were, the social habits of those days. *Melody* was cultivated in that bardic period, and the metrical fragments of those bards form part of the material of history.

As in Ireland, so on the Continent, the highest circles studied these arts. Some of the most antique Provençal poems were written by William the Ninth, Count of Poitou, born 1071.

And in England, Richard the First (twelfth century) exercised his talent for lyrical compositions; and in conjunction with Blondel, his bardic companion, composed a song, which afterwards effected the king's escape from prison. On his return from the wars of the Crusades, he was detained prisoner in a castle by the Duke of Austria, his subjects not knowing where he was. Blondel having wandered for a long time in search of his friend and patron, at length found out the place of his confinement, by singing a part of the song they had composed, to which Richard replied by singing the next stanza of the melody. This, of course, led to his liberation.

Reverting from this sketch, I again resume the sequel of our essay. We find that as the use of letters became general, history assumed a more definite form, by being, as the elegant Percy observes, "committed to plain simple prose; the songs of the scalds, or bards, began to be more amusing than useful; and in proportion as it became their business chiefly to entertain and delight, they gave more and more into embellishment, and set off their recitals with such marvellous fictions, as were calculated to captivate gross and ignorant minds."* At the period now before us, this was the case in Ireland to some extent; for about the twelfth or

* Essay on Ancient Metrical Romances.—*Reliques.*

thirteenth century, prose was substituted for verse in our histories; hence poetry was borne on the wings of imagination, or embellished by fiction; and thus the cultivation of metrical poetry ceased to be of so much importance, as it was no longer devoted to the high office of historic record.

Many authorities might be adduced in support of the assertion that music flourished in Ireland during the middle ages. A few extracts from the "Annals of Ireland" will show that this art was generally cultivated.

A.D. 1224 (Reign of Henry III.), Maurice, the canonist, son of Roderick O'Conor, one of the most eminent of the Irish, for learning, psalmody, and poetry, died.

A.D. 1226, Hugh, son of Dun O'Sochlachlain, aircineach of Cong, a learned scribe, skilled in psalmody, and in many arts and sciences, died.

A.D. 1269, Hugo Feenaghty, an eminent minstrel, died.

A.D. 1328 (Edward III.), Sir John Bermingham, Earl of Louth, the most valiant, powerful, and hospitable baron of the English of Ireland, was treacherously slain by his own people, viz., the English of Oriel (Louth); and many of the English and Irish along with him were also slain; among whom was blind O'Carrol, that is Mulrooney, who was the chief minstrel of Ireland and Scotland in his time.

A.D. 1361, some epidemic disease was prevalent, of which "Magrath O'Finn, chief professor of Siol Murray, (Roscommon,) in music and minstrelsy, died."

A.D. 1369, Malachy Mac Mahon, heir presumptive to the lordship of Orgial (Monaghan) * * * also John Mac Egan and Gilbert O'Barden, two most famous harpers of Conmaicne, (Leitrim,) died.

A.D. 1379 (Richard II.), William, son of the Gioll Coogh Mac Carroll, the most delightful minstrel of the Irish, died.—*An.* 4 *Mag*^{i}.

And we find that according to the munificent spirit of other days, in A.D. 1387, "a house of general entertainment and support was founded for the learned men of Ireland, at Eamhain Mach, (Armagh,) by Niall O'Neill, King of Ulster."

A.D. 1396, Matthew O'Luinin, archdeacon of Ardagh, a man versed in various arts and sciences, in history, poetry, music, and general literature, died."

A.D. 1399 (first year, Henry IV.), Baothghalach (Boetius) Mac Egan (of Ormond), a learned man in laws and in music, and eminent for hospitality, and Giolla-na-neev, son of Conor Mac Egan, chief professor of laws, died.

In these brief extracts I have not quoted the frequent notices of those "truly learned poets," or the eminent professors of sciences, or the chief historiographers, whose names so often meet the eye in these interesting annals, but merely quoted some of those records which relate to the practice of music. On this part of the subject I may adduce some other authorities.

In the fourteenth century, John de Furdun, a Scottish priest, was sent over here "to collect materials for a history of Scotland."* He expressly says, that "Ireland was the fountain of music in his time, whence it began to flow into Scotland and Wales." And John Major,† the eulogist of James the First of Scotland, called that

* Dr. O'Conor. † Died 1525.

prince another Orpheus, who touched the harp more exquisitely than either the Highlanders or the "Irish, *who were the most eminent harpers then known.*" Such are the terms of praise from men who have seldom exhibited much decided predilection to use flattery, especially towards Ireland.

Of the practical knowledge of our harpers of a later date, the Count de Hoghenski thus speaks:—"Les Irlandois sont entre tous les peoples ceux qui passent pour jouer le mieux de cet instrument"*—(the harp). (Of all the people, the Irish are esteemed the best performers on this instrument.) Let us now hear what our native annalist, John Clynn, says, in praising the merits of the harper O'Carrol, and his pupils; from which we may form some idea of the flourishing state of music at the time he wrote, about A.D. 1340, and we may also infer that a school of harpers existed about that period. "Camum O'Carrill, famosum fuisse tympanistam et cytharistam, in arte suâ Phœnicem; eâ pollens prærogativâ et virtute cum aliis tympanistis, discipulis ejus, circiter viginti; qui etsi non fuerit artis musicæ chordalis primus inventor, omnium tamen prædecessorum et præcedentium ipse ac contemporaneorum corrector, doctor† et director extitit." Thus it appears that this O'Carrol, like the Carolan of later days, was allowed to be the best harpist of his age. His abilities were also exercised on the tympanum, or drum, as at the first glance the term would seem to mean; but this percussive instrument would afford but little scope for such talents as those

* L'Encyclopædie, l'Art.—*Harpe.*

† Or rather, "ipse doctor ac contemporaneorum, &c."—Ed.

above described. However, some learned commentators on this passage are of opinion, that by the term tympanista, Clynn would understand a musical director, or orchestral master (chef d'orchestre), who beats the time with a baton, "which in Latin could not be more concisely expressed than by tympanista," the baton probably making a drumming sound by touching another substance.

This interpretation seems to accord with the context, as we find that Carrol's twenty scholars or disciples were tympanists, or masters of the art; yet, not equal to him. This "doctor and director excelled his predecessors and contemporaries in touching the musical chords." Clynn does not say that Carrol's disciples were merely practical harpists, but were, like that artist, tympanists; we may infer that they were masters of the tuneful art. Glossographers seem to support this view of the case.—(See Du Cange, voc tympanum, and medius.)

Pennant,* the historian of Wales, in speaking of the Welsh school of bards, takes especial care to distinguish with accuracy the masters of the art from the students; which seems to coincide with the interpretation above given, as being in accordance with the practice of that period. These poor "*enfans d'Apollon*" met a melancholy fate. Our annalist informs us, that O'Carrol and his pupils, together with their patron, Lord Bellingham, fell by the hands of an enraged multitude, who resisted by force some oppressive measures of the nobles.

While music thus flourished, its professors were che-

* Tour in Wales.

rished and honoured—if not as they had been in former days, yet to such an extent as the altered condition of society admitted of, and which still tended to promote the continued cultivation of the art. This position will be fully illustrated by a passage from L'Histoire et Cronique de Froissart,* which is so quaint and curious, and so graphic, as to the habits of those days, that I shall quote the chronicler's own quaint diction. Richard the Second was accompanied to Ireland by Richard Seury, an ancient knight, who was sent by that prince to visit the four Irish kings, (with whom "amicable relations" had been entered into,) to study the habits and customs of the Irish. He informed Froissart† that "Quand ces Roys estoyent asis à la table, et seruis du prèmièr mets, ils faisoyent seoir deuant eux leurs *Menestriers* et leurs prochains varlets, et manger a leur escuille, et aboire à leurs hannaps; et me disoyent que tel estoit l'usage du pais, et qu'en toutes choses, reseruè le lict, ils estoyent tous communs. Je leur souffri tout ce faire trois iours; et au quatriēme," continues this hoary chevalier, "ie fei ordonner tables, et courrir en la salle, ainsi comme il appartenoit: et fei les quatre Roys seior à haute table, et les *Menestriers* à une table bien ensus d'eux, et les varlets d'antre part; dont par semblant ils furent tous corroucès; et regardoyent l'un l'autre; et ne vouloyent manger: et disoyent qu'on leur vouloit oster leur bon usage; auquel ils anoyent estè nourris. Je leur respondy,

* Tome iv.

† The faithful chronicler, as Hayley calls him.—*Essay on History.*

tout en souriant pour les appaiser, que leur estat n'estoit point honnete, n' honnorable, a estre ainsi comme au-deuant ils auoyent fait, et qu'il le leur conuenoit laisser, et eux mettre à l'usage d'Angleterre, car de ce faire l'estoye chargè; et me l'auoit le Roy et son Conseil baillè par ordonnance. Quand ils ouirent ce, ils souffrirent (pourtant que mis s'estoyent en l' obeisance du Roy d'Angleterre) et persèuèrerent en celuy estat assez doueement, tant que ie fu auecques eux."

The antique orthography of this quaint chronicler may be some excuse for my giving the paragraph in a more familiar form. The ancient knight says, that "when these kings were seated at table, and served with the first course, they caused their MINSTRELS and nearest attendants to sit down before them, and to eat from their wooden bowls, and to drink from their cups; and they told me that such was the usage of their country, and that in every thing, except the bed, they had all in common. I allowed them to continue thus for three days, and on the fourth I ordered tables and service to be placed in the hall as it should be; and I caused the four kings to be seated at a high table, and the *minstrels* at another table much higher; and the attendants aside, with which they all appeared to be greatly displeased; they kept looking at one another, and would not eat, saying that we wished to deprive them of their good custom in which they had been brought up. I replied to them in a jocular manner, in order to appease them, that it was neither polite nor honourable on their part to continue as they had done heretofore, and that it was

their duty to alter it, and conform themselves to the usage of England; for I was charged to require it, that both the king and his council had so directed me to act, by ordinance. When they heard this, they submitted, (for the time they had placed themselves in obedience to the king of England,) and continued rather quietly as long as I remained with them."

The effort of this hoary chevalier, Seury, to take from the bards those honours and respect which were generally given, is not the only instance which history records of the desire of the British monarchs to diminish the influence of the bards; as we find that in the preceding reign of Edward the Third, the Duke of Clarence, while lord lieutenant of Ireland, had not more respect for the bards than this ancient knight, Seury; for, at a parliament held in Kilkenny, he made it penal for any person to entertain any of the Irish minstrels or rhymers.*

The Anglo-Norman kings, about that period, seemed to have been not less apprehensive of the power and influence of the bards, in arousing a spirit of national enthusiasm and martial feeling, in opposition to their desire for extended power, however unjustly acquired, than were monarchs of a later period. Hence we find, agreeably to the current tradition of Wales, that when the first Edward made a conquest of that country, he ordered all the bards that fell into his hands to be put to death.† This act of cruelty is described in Gray's ode,

* Davie's Discoverie, 1612.

† See Gray Barrington's Statutes, p. 358; Jones's Relics, &c.

"The Bard," the first lines of which present a fearful picture of the sombre deed:—

" 'Ruin seize thee, ruthless king,
Confusion on thy banners wait;
Tho' fanned by conquest's crimson wing,
They mark the air with idle state.
Helm nor haubeck's twisted mail,
Nor e'en thy virtues, Tyrant, shall avail
To save thy secret soul from nightly fears,
From Cambria's curse, from Cambria's tears!'
Such were the sounds that o'er the crested pride
Of the first Edward scattered wild dismay,
As down the steep of Snowdon's shaggy side
He wound with toilsome march his long array."

Reverting to the period of Henry the Fourth, the following episode, affording an illustration of the habits of those days, may not be deemed uninteresting, as connected with the history of the Irish bards. We find that Henry's most powerful opponent in Ireland was Art Mac Murrogh, called also the O'Cavanagh, descended from the ancient kings of Leinster. This monarch is described as being a man of fine stature, of strength, activity, and undaunted bravery; having successfully opposed Henry's forces during thirty years' war, of more than fifty battles. However, in 1395, as given in the Annals, an attempt was made to assassinate him. The narrative is thus given in Taaffe's Ireland:—"He was invited to a banquet by the English lords, all of whom came secretly armed; and Mac Murrogh arrived, accompanied only by his bard, and one attendant. After the feast, the minstrel, seated near a window, delighted the company with his music; but suddenly he changed his

notes to the *Rosg Catha*, or war-song, for which he was reprimanded by Mac Murrogh, and ordered to play only festive airs; but the bard again resumed his war ode, which surprised Mac Murrogh, who, becoming indignant at the disobedience of his harper, arose from the table to remonstrate with him, but perceived that the house was surrounded with armed forces; brandishing his sword, he struck terror into the company, none of whom dared to attack a warrior of such gigantic vigour. Mac Murrogh cut his way through the armed forces, mounted his steed, and, in spite of all their efforts, escaped with safety." The Irish Annals of the year 1417, record his death, in his sixtieth year, and in the forty-second of his government of Leinster. His memory is greatly eulogised: "The patron of literature and of science—the glory of chivalry is gone—poor Erin, weep; when, alas! shall his equal return?"

Those extracts, quoted from the Annals and the other authorities, sufficiently show that music still exercised its soothing influence in Ireland, even after the Anglo-Norman invasion—a period when the "halcyon notes" of peace were not much heard, during a protracted interval of aggression and defence; its character of expression became to some extent changed, as if responsive to the prevalent tone of feeling; thus those more sprightly and more animating modes, so consonant with the lively temperament and sympathies of the people, gave place to the grave Doric, or the softer Lydian measure; and "such was the nice sensibility of the bards," observes Mr. Walker, "such was their tender affection for their country, that the subjection to which the kingdom was reduced, affected

them with the heaviest sadness—sinking beneath this weight of sympathetic sorrow, they became a prey to melancholy. Hence the plaintiveness of their music—for the ideas that arise in the mind are always congenial to, and receive a tincture from the influencing passion."* As music may be considered a language of feeling or sentiment, it will naturally be expressive of the "tone of mind," and will most likely receive its character of exultant gladness, or be the exponent of pathetic sentiment, or desponding sadness, in proportion as those feelings prevail at the time. We also find that the mind receives impressions from the surrounding objects and circumstances, which tend, to some extent, to change its tone, and which would seem to almost alter its character; hence the prolonged struggles of his beloved land would impart a lasting feeling of sadness, through the gloom of which, perhaps, only the occasional "light of song" would break, making the shaded contrast the more sombre; and imagination may portray them, as addressing their harp, or figuratively the country, in terms not unlike the modern elegant bard of Erin:—

"Then, who can ask for notes of pleasure,
My drooping harp, from chords like thine?
Alas! the lark's gay morning measure
As ill would suit the swan's decline!"

MOORE.

The bards, also, with devoted attachment to their patrons, may be found sharing their misfortunes, and often with them, too, obliged, by the rude hand of oppressive

* Bacon says, that music "feedeth that disposition of the spirits which it findeth."—*Nat. His.*

warfare,* to seek an asylum in those more remote glens and valleys—those mountain retreats or gloomy forests, far from the haunts of men; and where the mountain-stream, re-echoing through the dells, uttered a species of gloomy music of nature, calculated to give impressions of sadness from the excluded position of such retreats; so that men, unhappily so circumstanced, would naturally essay the consoling voice of song, in plaintive accents, and which would form, perhaps, such grave and affecting music as Milton describes:—

> "——Bid the soul of Orpheus sing
> Such notes as warbled to the string,
> Drew iron tears down Pluto's cheek,
> And made Hell grant what Love did seek."

The harp, when tuned in the key of C, that key would be major, and correspond with the Ionic mode. The scale of D would have the minor third, and agree with the Dorian mode; the Mixo-Lydian, or scale of A, would give a minor third; and when this national instrument was tuned to the key of G, the most natural transition from that major mode would be to its relative minor E,

* From the "Irish Annals," A.D. 1415, we learn that Sir F. Talbot, Lord Furnival, the spoliating lord lieutenant of Ireland, made afterwards Earl Shrewsbury, who commanded in the French wars, amongst other depredations, and having shed "the blood of the Geraldines," "also plundered a great many of the bards of Ireland, namely, Dermod O'Daly, of Meath, Hugh Oge Magrath, Duvthach Mac Keogh, the learned, and Maurice O'Daly," with a long list of other names. Their wealth or influence, or perhaps both, made them objects of the spoiler's rude hand.

which gives the Phrygian, to which the Irish were "wholly inclined." Thus we find a prevalence of the minor third. Sir William Jones, the orientalist, seems to felicitate the present age on its advantages over the ancient Greeks, in the possession of the minor scale, which enables us to adapt our music to the expression of sorrow.* Mr. Marsden, in his history of Sumatra, observes, "that the Sumatran tunes very much resemble, to my ear, those of the native Irish, and usually, like them, a flat third." I may remark, that the scale given by nature is that having a major third, as likewise the harmony so given for a string vibrating, will resolve itself into harmonic proportions, and emit the major chord; the minor mode is the result of art. Many of our national melodies, in the major mode, modulate to the minor, and again revert to the former scale, not unlike the change of national feeling which so oft

"Smiles through its tears
Like a sunbeam in showers."

Thus, from the tuning or temperament of the harp, the simplest modulation would be to the relative minor. Hence, this may be another cause of its prevalence in our national music.† We should not disregard, however, another probable cause of the plaintive expression of the Irish music, and which would operate, both anterior and subsequent to this period, namely, the remarkable sus-

* Essay prefixed to Translations from the Asiatic Languages.

† See a former chapter on the Harp.

ceptibility of the bard to those emotions inspired by the tender passion of love; for while the mind is enduring the mixed sensations of hopes and fears, gaiety resigns her wonted power, and the feeling of the mind is echoed in the music. Thus most of the productions of the amorous poets generally are elegiac; we need only instance Petrarch amongst the many.

In allusion to the amorous disposition of the Irish bards, a writer in "The Gentleman's Magazine"* says, that "the subject of these (their songs) is always love; and they seem to understand poetry to be designed for no other purpose than to stir up that passion in the mind." He then quotes an Irish pastoral sonnet of the desponding lover, to illustrate this position; and from which I extract the following lines:—

"Blest were the days, when in the lonely shade,
Joined hand in hand, my love and I have stray'd;
Where apple-blossoms scent the fragrant air,
I've snatch'd soft kisses from the wanton fair.

"She did the feather'd choir in songs rejoice;
How oft the cuckoo tuned her soothing voice;
The gentle thrush with pride display'd his throat,
Vying in sweetness to the blackbird's note.

"But now, my love, how wretched am I made;
My health exhausted, and my bloom decay'd!
Pensive, I roam the solitary grove—
The grove delights not—for I miss my love."

Ritson,† in his "Essay on National Song," observes,

* Vol. i. page 147.

† A lawyer and antiquary, died 1803.

that this song has "uncommon elegance and merit;" and we are informed by Mr. Walker that "the Irish language abounds in lyric compositions, that would do honour to the most polished nation of ancient or modern times;" and we find that poetical writers have not hesitated to borrow and adopt, as Spenser did, many of those poetical flowers to grace their works—thus sharing the fate of many of those beautiful melodies to which they were written.

According to the authority of the learned linguist, Mr. O'Flanigan, the charming song in the third act of Sheridan's "Duenna," beginning thus, "How oft, Louisa, hast thou said," is a close and elegant translation of an old Irish song, the original of which he gives.*

The following stanzas are taken from an Irish sonnet, thus elegantly translated by Ed. Nolan, Esq., of Dublin, and which appeared complete in "The European Magazine,"† and may serve as a specimen of those amorous lyrics of the Irish bards of past days:—

"Thou dear seducer of my heart,
Fond cause of every struggling sigh—
No more can I conceal love's smart—
No more restrain the ardent eye.

"What, tho' this tongue did never move
To tell thee all its master's pain;
My eyes—my look—have spoke of love—
Alvina! shall they speak in vain?

* Even Virgil did not disdain to appropriate some of those "floretti" which he borrowed from Homer, to adorn his own great poem.‡

† Vol. ii., page 471, quoted from Walker.

‡ Walker's Memoirs.

"For, still imagination warm
Presents thee at the noontide beam,
And sleep gives back thy angel form
To clasp thee in the midnight dream."

On the plaintive expression of our melodies, Dr. Campbell observes, that "their (the Irish) finest airs are of a plaintive turn, and (are) supposed to have been set to the elegies for renowned warriors, or (to) the sighs of complaining lovers;" and in illustration of the latter class, he names the antique air, "*Cara can dilis*," or, the "Black-headed deary," the title of which, he says, affords abundant evidence; but the names even of this numerous class would be too long to enumerate. I may, however, mention the beautiful airs of "Molly asthore," or "Mary, my treasure;" "*Oh, Maire deelish*," "Oh, Molly my dear;" and "My love and treasure," to show that the softer emotions of love imparted an expression of tenderness to many of our melodies. These airs might be classed in five species—namely, the *amorous*, the *festive*, the *rural*, the *martial*, and the *dirge music*.

The Irish harp underwent improvements at various periods. In the fifteenth century, it was considerably improved by the ingenious Robert Nugent, a Jesuit, who resided in this kingdom for some time. "He enclosed the open space between the trunk and upper part (or arm) of this instrument, with little pieces of wood, and closed it up after the manner of a box; and the bored part, or sound-hole, on the right side, which was formerly open, he covered with a lattice-work of wood, as in the clavichord, and then placed a double row of

chords on each side."* The innovation is thus described by Dean Lynch:—"Nostrâ memoriâ Rev. admodum Pater Robertus Nugent, qui societate Jesu per Hiberniam plures annos, summa cum laude, prefuit, nova accessione, ab ipso excogitatâ, non modicè Lyram ornavit; spatium enim, inter truncum et superiores Lyræ partes, patulum asserculis in cistulæ morem efformatis, clausit, et foramen in dextro cistæ latere positum, exiguo tantum ligneo clathro obstruxit, ut in clavichordiis videmus; tum hinc et illinc duplici chordarum ordine collocato, Lyram suavissimæ modulationi accommodissimum fecit."† In consequence of this valuable improvement, a double row of strings were extended along the trunk, giving two strings to each sound—which, when vibrating in unison, produced a rich and sonorous quality of tone;‡ and it also afforded increased facilities for the uninterrupted progression of the passages with either hand.

We find that the Irish harp possessed the power to charm the ears of the English philosopher, Bacon, who says, that "the harp hath the concave, not along the strings, but across the strings; and no harp hath a sound so melting and prolonged as the Irish harp." I may also quote from "Evelyn's Journal,"§ the following: "Came to see my old acquaintance, and most incomparable player on the Irish harp, Mr. Clarke, after his travels; such music before or since did I never hear,

* Walker.

† Grat. Lucius, page 37.

‡ A similar mode is adopted in the pianoforte.

§ Seventeenth century.

that instrument being neglected for its extraordinary difficulty; but in my judgment far superior to the lute itself, or whatever speaks with strings."

While music was cultivated in Ireland in the manner which I have endeavoured to point out, it may not be uninteresting to glance at its progress in England about the same period.

From about the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, secular music was chiefly cultivated by the minstrels, by whom melody was especially preserved; and we find, according to Shakspere, that the harp was used as an accompaniment to the voice. Thus, in "Henry the Fourth," Owen Glendower addresses Hotspur:—

> "I can speak English, lord, as well as you,
> For I was train'd up in the English court,
> Where, being young, I framed to the harp
> Many an English ditty."*

At a later period, however, according to the testimony of John Baldwin, the writer of the "Canticles, or Balades of Solomon," published in English metre, A.D. 1549, we find that the nobility and gentry of England, were gratified with amorous or "indelicate" ballads, set to rude music. This false taste is condemned, in coarse terms, by the writer named. Tye and Tallis, in the time of Henry the Eighth, advanced music, which was more successfully cultivated by Bird, Gibbons, and Lawes, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

* Act III.

Milton's sonnet to Henry Lawes, must give us a favourable impression of his abilities :—

> "Harry, whose tuneful and well-measured song,
> First taught our English music how to span
> Words with just note and accent, not to scan
> With Midas' ears, committing short and long."

Or again, he speaks of him as one

> "Who, with soft pipe, and smooth dittied song,
> Well knows to still the wild winds when they roar,
> And hush the waving woods."

But we are indebted for the development of harmony to the ecclesiastical writers; and yet we find it in a simple state in the sixteenth century; for in "*The Booke of Common Praier, noted,*" as published by John Marbeck, A.D. 1550, and as "appointed to be sung in churches," only four species of notes are used, and these in the square and lozenge-shaped forms, and written on four red lines, as found in the antique Antiphonariums, and plain chant music of an earlier period. But a taste for the charms of harmony becoming more general, in A.D. 1563, "*The whole Psalmes, in foure partes,* which may be sung to all musical instruments," were published. From about this period, harmony became developed* in

* And yet the taste, it appears, did not become refined to the extent which this practical skill would indicate; for Prinn, in his Histrio-mastrix, published in 1663, says, that the Church Music of his day was like the "*bleating of brute beasts.*" However, the compositions of that period would lead us to think otherwise.

England, by the genius of successive eminent writers; of whom not the least was the great Purcell.

It must be a source of regret to those who take an interest in the progress of the arts, to find that while we record the progress of music in England, we are obliged to note the steps taken to disparage those hereditary votaries of the muses—the bards of Ireland—who had been for ages the conservators faithful of the art. Yet such is the fact; as we shall find that severe enactments were made by Henry the Eighth, and succeeding monarchs, to discountenance them, and to bring that once-favoured order into disrespect.

We shall revert to this subject in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SIXTEENTH CENTURY.

The influence which the bardic order continued to exercise—their power to stimulate the patriotism, or to kindle the warm glow of enthusiasm in the hearts of the native chieftains, or with soothing sympathy to cheer the desponding spirits of their countrymen ;—the influence so wielded, tended to make them be regarded with any thing but a kindly feeling by the Britith monarchs, who, from about this time, sought to diminish the influence so exercised. (I need only refer to the instance already given, of the effect of the bard Nelan's impassioned harangue on the mind of the young Geraldine.) Thus we find, that when Henry the Eighth continued "to play the tyrant" in England, oppressive measures were extended to Ireland ; as Baron Finglass proposed, in his breviate, some severe regulations affecting the Irish bards and minstrels. "*Item.* That noo Irish *minstralls, rymers, shannaghs* (genealogists), ne *bards*, be messingers to desire any goods of any man, dwelling within the English Pale, upon pain of forfeiture of all

their goods, and their bodys to be imprisoned at the king's will."*

And Mr. Walker informs us, that "in the twenty-eighth year of this reign, an act was made, respecting the habits, and the dress in general, of the Irish; whereby all persons were restrained from being shorn or shaven above the ears, and from wearing *glibbes* or *coulins* (long locks), on their heads, or hair on their upper lip, called *crommeal*. On this occasion, a song was written by our bards, in which an Irish virgin is made to give the preference to her dear coulin, or youth with the flowing locks, to all strangers—by which the English were meant, or those who wore their habit. Of this song, the air alone has reached us, and is universally admired."

On this subject, Mr. Moore has written the exquisite lines:—

"Tho' the last glimpse of Erin with sorrow I see,
Yet wherever thou art, shall seem Erin to me;
In exile thy bosom shall still be my home,
And thine eyes make my climate wherever we roam.

"To the gloom of some desert, or cold rocky shore,
Where the eye of the stranger can haunt us no more,
I will fly with my coulin, and think the rough wind
Less rude than the foes we leave frowning behind."

With regard to the precise period in which the act was passed to which these beautiful lines refer, there is some difference of opinion. It appears, from a learned

* Harris's Hibernica.

paper, by Mr. Lynch, which appeared in the first volume of the *Dublin Penny Journal,* that the act referred to was passed so early as A. D. 1295 (Edward I.) The act in question recites, that "the English, being in a manner degenerated, having of late clothed themselves in Irish raiment, and having their heads half shaved, nourish and prolong the hair from the back of the head, calling it *Culan*, conforming to the Irish, as well in face and aspect, as in dress, whereby it oftentimes happens that certain Englishmen, being mistaken for Irishmen, are slain, albeit that the slaying of an Englishman and the slaying of an Irishman are crimes which demand different modes of punishment; by reason whereof, great cause of enmity and rancour is generated amongst many persons, and the kinsmen of the slayer as well as of the slain do frequently fall at feud. Be it therefore enacted, &c."

Dr. Burney ascribes the song to this period.*

Mr. Moore alludes to this act, in his history of Ireland under the reign of Edward First, A.D. 1295. The original act is quoted below.

We find that about A. D. 1368 (Ed. III.), an act was passed that "he that will be taken for an Englishman, shall not use a beard upon his upper lip alone; the offender shall be taken for an Irish enemy." This is quoted from Walker's memoirs.

The English of the Pale† had conformed to the dress of the Irish, by which the latter had easier access to it.

* Stewart, the historian of Armagh, ascribes it to this date.

† A certain district including the city of Dublin.

They wore mustachios, as did the "degenerate" English; hence these were ordered to shave the upper lip once a fortnight at least, to distinguish them from the Irish. This act was repealed by Charles II.

In the year 1447, an act was passed (25th Henry VI. chap. 4), ordaining "that no manner of man that will be taken for an Englishman shall have no beard above his mouth—that is to say, that he have no hairs upon his upper lip—so that the said lip be once at the least shaven every fortnight, or of equal growth with the nether lip." This last-mentioned statute was repealed, 11th of Charles I.; and I mention it, as merely leading the way to the before-mentioned statute of Henry VIII.

I have been favoured by the following apposite remarks, by a learned friend, distinguished for his legal as well as scientific and antiquarian acquirements:*—

"The passage in the first volume of the *Dublin Penny Journal* is a communication from an anonymous writer, who signs himself 'W. L.,' and dates his letter, 'London, Carleton Chambers, Regent-street. The writer denies the accuracy of Mr. Moore's observation, that the coulin originated in a statute passed in Ireland, the 28th of Henry VIII., respecting the habits and dress of the Irish. He *asserts* that that is *an imaginary* enactment, and he states that on turning to the above statute, *no mention is to be found therein of the coulin, nor was there any account of such a proceeding amongst the Irish chieftains in that reign.* He then states that in the

* T. L. Cooke, Esq., Author of the History of Birr, or Parsonstown.

year 1295 a parliament was held in Dublin, and an act passed for the prohibition of the coulin. He adds an extract which he says he took from one of the original cathedral registries (*but he does not name it*). This extract is as follows:—

"'The English likewise degenerating in these latter times, clothe themselves in Irish garments, and having half-shaved heads, nourish and extend their hair at the back of the head, and call them *Culan*, conforming themselves to the Irish as well in dress as in personal appearance—whereby it often happens that some English are killed, as if they were Irish; though the killing of English and Irish requires different modes of punishment—by occasion of this circumstance, cause of ill-will and rancour is generated amongst very many—the relatives also of the slain and the slayer in after times succeeding, are reciprocal enemies. And therefore it is agreed and granted, that all English in this land at least, in their head-gear, which principally presents itself to view, shall bear the habits and tonsure of the English, nor more presume to turn back their hair into a *Colan;* which, if they shall do, the justices, sheriffs, seneschals of liberties, lords also, in whose lordships Englishmen of this sort shall be found, and their seneschals shall distrain and compel those English by their lands and chattels, and likewise by arrest and imprisonment of their body, to lay it aside if the dress be Irish, at least as to the head or hair. Nor let answer be more fully given to an Englishman having his head transformed into the shape of an Irishman, other than is now

answered to an Irishman, if he make complaint in like case.'*

"You will by this have perceived that the statute given by 'W. L.' from an unnamed cathedral registry, was only a prohibition to the *English* using the coulin; but that would not have caused the *Irish* ladies to lament, in their native language and melody, the loss of the coulin they so much prized, as ornamenting the heads of their *Irish husbands or lovers*. What cared the Irishwoman in 1265 (the date fixed on by 'W. L.'), while the English invasion was yet fresh in the minds of *many then living*, if not only the hair but the head of the invader had been taken off. Not so, however, was the feeling when, in 1537 (28th of Henry VIII.), the *Irish*

* "Anglici etiam quasi degeneres modernis temporibus Hibernicalibus se inducent vestimentis et habentes capita semirasa capillos a retro capitis nutriunt et allongant et illos. Culan vocant Hibernicis tam habitu quam facie se conformantes; per quod frequenter accidit Anglicos quosdam pro Hibernicis interfici, licet Anglicorum et Hibernicorum occiso diversos modos postulat perniendi; per occasionem hujus inter quamplurimos inimicitiæ materia generatur et rancoris, affines quoque tam occisoris quam occisi sæpe (prosterrum suum) alternatim velut inimici. Et eo circo concordatum est et concessum quod omnes Anglici, in hac terra saltem in capite, quod plus visui se presentat mores et tonsuram gerant Anglicorum nec amplius presumant avertere comas in Colanum, quod si fecerint justiciarius vicecomes seneschallus libertatum. Domini etiam in quorum dominio Anglici hujusmodi, reperiantur et eorum seneschalli Anglicos illos per terras et catalla sua necnon et per arrestationem corporis, sui et imprisonamentum si notorium fuerit habitum Hibernacalim saltem in capite seu capillis relinquere distringant et compellant; nec amplius respondeatur Anglico caput habenti in forma Hibernici, transmutatum quam Hibernico respondetur si in casu consimili questus esset."

themselves were forbidden 'to use the wearing of hair upon their heads, like unto long locks, called glibbs.' It is nonsense for 'W. L.' to say there was no such Irish statute in the 28th of Henry VIII., as mentioned by our own countryman, Moore. Every one acquainted with the Irish language knows that Cuaılaıŋ (Cuailain) is 'a lock, a curl, a wreath,' and that Glib (Glib), the word used in the statute of Henry VIII., also means 'a lock of hair.'—*See O'Reilly's Irish Dictionary.*

"I have now before me the statute-book, and the statute Moore relies on is, I find, on it printed as chapter 15. After a long preamble it enacts, 'That *no person ne persons*, after the first of May, which shall be in the yeare of our Lord God a thousand five hundred thirtie-nine, shall be shorn or shaven above the eares, or use the wearing of haire upon their heads, like unto long lockes, called glibbes,' &c. This statute was levelled not only against the use of long flowing hair amongst the English, but likewise against its being used by the Irish or any other person whatsoever.

"Here, then, you have, *for the first time*, cause for the Irish lamenting their coulin, and the statute of Harry VIII. has well compensated for its quaint jargon and oppressive enactments, by calling forth the beautiful words and air of that melody called 'The Coulin.'"

A good specimen of the Irish Cuaılaıŋ (Cuailain), or glibb, being the long head of hair formerly worn in Ireland, may be seen on a figure on an ancient stone cross still extant at the abbey of Durrow, in the King's County.

The custom of wearing the hair seems to have been

derived from the East; and it would appear to be usually worn amongst people inclined to preserve primitive habits.

Cambrensis affected to sneer at the Irish chiefs, who, it appears, wore their hair, which he calls a "barbarous" custom; however, we learn that the Egyptians wore their hair, and yet *they* were *not* considered a "barbarous" people. The Lacedemonians considered it as the symbol of candour; and a part of Gaul was called the "*Gallia Comitta*," on account of the long hair worn by the people.

In 1366 (Ed. III.), an act was passed, expelling the bards from the pale or district under the English government, "under pain of imprisonment and forfeiture of the instruments of their minstrelsy." The cause assigned for this stringent measure was, that they discovered the secrets and objects of those in the government district; a fact, it is remarked, "which inferentially establishes their accomplishments to be of the higher order, when they could procure their ingress and influence even amongst an hostile people."*

In this reign, it was made penal to entertain any of the Irish bards, as enacted by the Duke of Clarence in a parliament held at Kilkenny.

It appears that the minstrels were still cherished, notwithstanding this severe law; for in the reign of Henry the Sixth (fifteenth century), a commission was issued for the enforcement of the above law, as the Irish minstrels visited the Pale, and received gifts, and "ex-

* Progress of Music in Ireland.—*New Lib. of Knowledge*, 1845.

ercising their minstrelsy contrary to law," and exploring the secrets of the districts to report them to their countrymen.

In the reign of Elizabeth, the bardic character which was once so reverenced in Ireland, began, from the severity of the measures taken to degrade that order, to fall into neglect, an object apparently so much desired by the British monarchs. The description of the bards, given by Spenser, the poet, who wrote in accordance with the prevailing views, will afford some idea of this class in their declining state; and so little was he disposed to look favourably on them, that he sets forth his reasons for recommending their extirpation.* Yet he is obliged to eulogise some of their productions.

"There is, amongst the Irish, a certain kind of people called the bardes, which are to them instead of poets, whose profession it is to set forth the praises or dispraises of men in their poems or rithmes; the which are held in such high regard and estimation amongst them,† that none dare displease them, for fear to run into reproach thorough their offence, and to be made infamous in the mouths of all men. For their verses are taken up with a general applause, and usually sung at all the feasts and meetings, by certain other persons,‡

* This poet-"undertaker" also proposed a plan for the extirpation of the natives.

† The high estimation in which the bards were held at the beginning of this reign, is testified by Sir Philip Sydney, who says, "In our neighbor-countrie Irelande, where truly learning goe's very bare, yet their poets are held in a devout reverence."—*Defence of Poesie.*

‡ The Ricaraide—O'Conor.

whose proper function that is, who also receive for the same great reward, and reputation amongst them."

"These Irish bardes are, for the most part, so far from instructing young men in moral discipline, that they themselves do more deserve to be sharply disciplined; for they seldom use to choose unto themselves the doings of good men for the arguments of their poems; but whomsoever they find to be most licentious of life, most bold and lawless in his doings, most dangerous and desperate in all parts of disobedience and rebellious disposition, him they set up and glorifie in their rithmes; him they praise to the people, and to young men make an example to follow." After other severe strictures, this writer says, in conclusion, "I have caused divers of these poems to be translated to me, that I might understand them; and surely they savoured of sweet wit and good invention, but skilled not of the goodly ornaments of poetry; yet they were sprinkled with some pretty flowers of their natural device, which gave good grace and comliness unto them.*"

It is suggested to those learned commentators on Spenser, who, unwilling to give the author of "The Fairie Queene" much praise for originality, have sought to trace his legends through the Greek and Roman classics, and the European poetic literature, that they might be, perhaps, more successful in that object by glancing at some of those Irish poems which Spenser had translated to him, and with which he was so much gratified. In these they might probably find the proto-

* View of the State of Ireland.

types of many of those fanciful subjects which have been sought for in vain elsewhere, and which were likely, from the antique language in which they have been written, to escape the eye of many; and some of those "flowers" might have been transplanted without much chance of immediate detection.

Notwithstanding the no very flattering picture of our bards given by Spenser, yet we find that they were not entirely devoted in offering the incense of their praise to the unworthy; as we are informed by Walker that "they frequently exercised their talents with zeal to preserve their country from the chains which were forging for it. They flung themselves into the midst of the armies of their much-injured countrymen, striking their harps with

'A louder, and yet a louder strain,'*

till they raised the martial fury of the soldiery to such an elevated pitch, that they often rushed on their enemies with the impetuosity of a mountain-torrent, sweeping all before them, till they reached the standard of victory."

We are also told that Philip—of Macedon, was not more jealous of the eloquence of Demosthenes than was Elizabeth of the influence which the Irish bards continued to exercise over their chieftains; and the revengeful jealousy of that monarch began soon to manifest itself towards them by the passing of penal statutes against

* Ode for St. Cecilia's day.—DRYDEN.

them,* from which the following passages are extracted:—

"*Item*—Forasmuche as no small enormyties doo growe within those shires (counties of Cork, Limerick, and Kerry) by the continuall recourse of certain idle men of lewd demeanor, called *rymors*, *bards*, and dyce-players, called corroghs, who, under pretence of their travaill, doo bring privy intelligence betweene the malefactors inhabitynge in these several shires, to the grete distruction of true subjects, that orderes be taken with the said lordes and gentlemen (the Earl of Desmond and his followers), that none of those sects, nor outhere like evil persons be suffride to travaill within there rules, as the statutes of Irelande doo appoint; and that proclamation be made accordinglie; and whosoever after the proclamation shall myntaine or suffre any suche idlemen wythin there several terrytories—that he or they shall paye suche fines as to the discretion of the said commissioners or presidents (of Munster) for the time being shall be thoughte goode.

"*Item*—For that those *rymors* do by their ditties and rhymes made to dyvers lords and gentlemen in Irelande, in the commendation and highe praise of extortion, rebellyon, rape, raven, and outhere injustice, encourage those lords and gentlemen rathere to followe those vices than to leve them; and for making such rhymes, rewards are gyven by the saide lords and gentlemen, that

* They loved their "*Fatherland*" too well; hence those severe measures of the British Queen.

fore abolishinge of soo heynouse an abuse ordres be taken with saide earle, lordes, and gentlemen, that none of them from hencefourth doo give any manner of rewarde for any such lewde rhymes; and he that shall offend the ordres to pay a fine to the Queenes Majestie double the value of that he shall soo paye, and that the rymer that shall make any suche rhymes or ditties shall be fyne according to the discretiance of the saide commissioners, and that proclamation be made accordinglie."* Thus, like Sir W. Scott's "Last Minstrel"—

> "The bigots of the iron time
> Had call'd his harmless art a crime."

The Welsh bards, it appears, incurred the displeasure of Elizabeth, as a commission was ordered to be held in 1558 at Caewys, to reform the order.

In the elegant verses written in the Dargle, county Wicklow, by Mr. Preston, that poet takes occasion to exhibit in "its true light the base policy of Elizabeth." The persecuted bards are represented as seeking an asylum amid the romantic scenery of that charming locality—

> "For here, in old heroic times,
> The minstrel wak'd his lofty rhymes;
> He tun'd his harp, he bade them flow,
> Attemper'd to the streams below.
> When England would a land enthral,
> She doomed the Muse's sons to fall,
> Lest Virtue's hand should string the lyre,
> And feed with song the patriot's fire.

* Rot. Parl., de anno 6 Eliz.

Lo! Cambria's bards her fury feel;
See, Erin mourns the bloody steel;
To such a scene, to such a shade,
Condemn'd, proscrib'd, the poet stray'd.
The warrior rais'd his buckler high,
To shade the son of harmony;
And while he sung with skill profound,
A grove of lances bristled round."

From this period we may date the decline of the bardic order in Ireland. That class of men who so long had exercised considerable power and influence over the minds of men, either to charm or soothe the feelings, or to arouse other dormant passions, were now deprived of patronage, proscribed, and were supposed by this law to be extinct. They were now obliged to practise the charms of their art in solitude, or to seek the more humble and hospitable roof,

"And tuned to please a peasant's ear,
The harp a king had loved to hear,"

as it was penal for the gentry to entertain them; and thus we find those bards, who were, in former and more propitious times, the dispensers of hospitality, were now reduced to legal non-existence. Now in reality was

"The cold chain of silence"

thrown o'er that harp, whose numbers had so oft afforded gladness and joy to the admiring groups, as its tones resounded through those ancient halls of former days.

And even yet we can fancy the minstrel lingering near

the form of his loved *Clarseach*, the partner of earlier joys, and while he essayed to cheer his drooping spirits by its soothing tones, he would address it in pathetic accents, not unlike those so beautifully expressed by our poet—

> "But come—if yet thy form can borrow
> One breath of joy, oh! breathe for me,
> And show the word; in chains and sorrow,
> How sweet thy music still can be."

These severe measures, intended to abolish the bardic order, convey to us a feeling of regret, both for the loss occasioned to society by the decline of that art whose influence tended so much to soften and refine the mind, as also from the tendency of those laws to check the onward progress and development of music generally; and the musical amateur will see with regret their immediate effect, by the decline of that school of harp-music in Ireland, which was once the theme of admiration.

These men were the successful cultivators of instrumental music in Ireland, as we have seen from history. The development of the art was in their hands; its effects on society are admitted, and its general cultivation tended to improve the taste; but unhappily these measures operated to deprive society then of such influences, and the want of which are felt to some extent by us, even to the present time. To these causes may be ascribed the partial neglect of the art; and to which may also be added, unhappily, the almost continual depressed condition of the people; they being seldom in the enjoy-

ment of the blessing of peace, so necessary to the progress of the fine arts, and the general elevation of the social condition. Hence we may form an idea of the causes of our not continuing to maintain that high reputation for the cultivation of music, for which the nation in earlier ages was so distinguished.

Few only of the names of those bards, whose artistic acquirements had distinguished them at that period, have reached us, nor are these accompanied with many particulars respecting them. Mr. O'Conor tells us that in latter times, Teige Mac Bruodin, of Thoumond, (Limerick); Teige Dall O'Higgin, of Leyney, (county Sligo); O'Gnive,* of Clanaboy; Tiege Mac Dary, of Thoumond; Lugad O'Clery, of Tirconall, (Donegal); and O'Heosy, of Orgiall, (Ulster); had noble talents; but, in most instances, their talents were diverted from those higher purposes, to which in earlier times the bardic order had devoted their talent, and in these instances their effusions were applied to barren subjects, or to personal panegyric. Some of the songs of these bards, "*savouring* of *sweet wit* and *good invention*," are still extant, but many of them have been lost in the "waves of time." However, we find that many important documents on matters of poetical and historical interest relating to Ireland, are still extant in the continental archives. We find that M. O'Halloran obtained from Rome a collection of papers, amongst which were several poems of the most eminent Irish

* O'Gnive, chief Bard to O'Neill (Earl of Tyrconnell), accompanied this celebrated chieftain to the court of Elizabeth.

bards of the last two centuries. It would be a matter of no small interest if some of our learned antiquarian societies would bring to light those national fragments which lie entombed in the archives of other nations, and which would add much to our national literature.*

The name of Mac Curtin, although omitted in the foregoing list, is worthy of a niche in the temple of the tuneful muse. He was hereditary Ollamh of North Munster, and Filea to Donough O'Brien, Earl of Thomond, and President of Munster. This nobleman was prevailed upon to join Elizabeth's forces. But Mac Curtin presented a laudatory poem to Mac Carthy, chief of South Munster, who, as Walker observes, "with O'Neil, O'Donnel, Lacy, and others, were deeply engaged in protecting their violated country." The poem praised the patriotism of the Mac Carthy; but the lines which also should commend O'Brien, were turned into satire. "How am I afflicted," said he, "that the descendant of the great Brien Boroimh cannot furnish me with a theme worthy of the honour and glory of his exalted race." For this remark, the bard had to take refuge in Cork, but he was subsequently restored into favour.

An illustration of the very spirited and exciting addresses which were often delivered by the bards to their chiefs and the people, may be seen in that of O'Gnive,

* The publication of the Irish Annals, now in progress, is an important step towards this object. The labours of our Archæological Societies are highly interesting.

Ollamh to the O'Neills, and which is translated in Mr. Walker's memoirs, and is also versified and published in the interesting "Ballad Poetry of Ireland."*

Even amidst the vicissitudes and varied fortunes which were experienced by many of the Irish chieftains in this reign, we find that the muse was not entirely neglected by them, as some were found who devoted their hours of repose to the cultivation of music. We owe the simple and beautiful melody of *Eibhlin-a-Ruin*,† to the taste of the accomplished Carroll O'Daly, an accomplished chieftain who had added to his other acquirements those of the musician and poet.

O'Daly had sought and gained the affections of the fair Elinor Kavanagh; but O'Daly, having gone on business to a distant locality, the lady's relations, being opposed to O'Daly, pressed the fair Ellen to promise her hand to another gentleman, chosen by them. Of this, Carroll, who was still the fond lover, received intelligence, and disguising himself as a minstrel, he hastened to her father's house, where the guests were assembled to grace the nuptial festivities. Having amused the company with feats of legerdemain, for some time—taking his harp, he played and sung the elegant melody of *Eibhlin-a-Ruin*, which he had composed for the occasion;‡ by which, with some other intelligible language, he made himself known to his lady; she, being moved with his devotion, at once de-

* Edited by C. G. Duffy, Esq.

† Ellen-a-Roone.

‡ Bunting is of opinion that he only composed the words to it.

termined to reward such a faithful lover. But one mode presented itself to accomplish this, namely, that of immediate elopement. To effect this, she caused the "generous wine" to be circulated more freely to all the guests—and at a favourable moment, O'Daly, like another Lochinvar, fled with the fair one beyond the reach of pursuit.

On this air, Dr. Campbell remarks, that "the *Cognoscenti*, I think, allow that Ireland has a school of music. Ellen-a-Roon has always been esteemed as one of the finest melodies of any country. *Langolee* and *Kin-du-Deelas* (Cara ceann dilis), are of the same cast."

This air, strangely enough, was sung by an Italian vocalist, and with Irish words, about sixty years ago—the singer indulging in all the ornate *fiorituri* of the Italian style; but with better taste, it is now generally given in its unadorned and original graceful simplicity.

Burns, the sweet poet of Ayrshire, twice adapted words to this air.* The words of "Robin Adair" are sometimes applied to it; but the elegant poetry of Erin's native bard,

> "Erin, thy smile, and the tear in thine eye,
> Blend like the rainbow that hangs in thy sky,"

is married to this exquisite melody.

The family of O'Daly has been for centuries distinguished for their romantic courage, and bardic acquirements. They appear to have had possessions in Connaught as early as the twelfth century, and their names

* Thompson, 1794.

are recorded frequently in the "Annals of the Four Masters," and in O'Reilly's Irish Writers, from the twelfth to the seventeenth century. Members of this family occupied distinguished rank, both as ecclesiastics,* and also at the bar. In the reign of James II., an O'Daly was one of the judges of the Common Pleas; and St. George O'Daly, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, became one of the Justices of the King's Bench, in the reign of George the Third and Fourth.†

Some idea may be formed of the state of music in Ireland during the latter half of the sixteenth century, by an extract from the "New Description of Ireland," by Barnaby Rich, who visited this country about that time, and who thus writes of the people of that period:— "They have harpers, and those are so reverenced among the Irish, that in time of rebellion they will forbear to hurt either their persons or their goods, but are rather inclined to give them; and they are very bountiful either to *rhymers* or fools."

* Also the distinguished Dominick O'Daly, Bishop of Coimbra, died in Lisbon, 1662. Vide "The Irish Writers of the seventeenth Century."

† The modern Kerry Rhymer (quoted by Crofton Croker in his amusing popular "Irish Legends") thus celebrates the fame of the O'Dalys:—

"The name stands recorded for learning and love
On earth here below, and in heaven above;
For musical numbers, no man there has been
A rival to Cormac of Kilcrohan green.

"His son, John O'Daly, a heart had of fire;
He travelled, and he too with skill touched the lyre;
No soldier so brave in the battle was seen,
As O'Daly, the hero of Kilcrohan green."

Crusius, an eminent harpist, who resided within the Pale about this period, is thus celebrated by Stanihurst:— "Vivit hac nostrâ ætate Crusius, ad lyram post hominum memoriam, quam maximè insignis: is, ab illo inconditæ strepitu, qui incontentis, secumque discordantibus fidibus sit, plurium abhorret; contraque eo modorum ordine, sonorum compositione musicum observat concentum, quo auditorum aures mirabiliter ferit, ut enim citiùs solum, quam summum cytharistam judicares; ex quo intelligi potest, no musicis lyram, sed lyræ musicos hactenùs defuisse."* "In these days lives Crusius, the most remarkable harper within the memory of man. He carefully avoids that jarring sound which arises from unstretched and untuned string; and, on the contrary, by a certain regulation of modes, and selection of tones, he preserves an harmonious concord, which has a surprising effect upon the ears of his auditors, so that you would consider him rather as the only, than the greatest harper. Hence we may conclude, that performers have not hitherto wanted the harp, but the harp performers." We have also the testimony of John Good, an ecclesiastic, who had been educated at Oxford, and who was, for many years, master of a school at Limerick; and who, at the request of William Camden, wrote, in the year 1566, his "Discription of the Manners and Customs of the Wild Irish," as he was pleased to call them; regarding whose skill in music he says, that "they love music mightily, and of all instruments, are particularly taken with the harp, which being beaten with crooked nails, is

* De Rebus Gestis in Hib.

very melodious." From these quotations we find, that notwithstanding the depressed condition of the Irish people, from the continued necessity of defence during the latter half of the sixteenth century, and the hostility manifested by Elizabeth towards the bards; yet we see that the spirit of sweet song was not quite extinct amongst the people, but that even under these unfavourable circumstances, its pleasing accents were occasionally heard to soothe the senses and cheer the mind.

A curious musical incident is related by Bishop Gibson, which shows that the songs of the Irish harpers were sometimes founded in fact. His lordship says, that "near Ballyshannon, were, not many years ago, dug up two pieces of gold, discovered by a method very remarkable. The Bishop of Derry happening to be at dinner, there came an Irish harper, and sung an old song to his harp; his lordship not understanding Irish, was at a loss to know the meaning of the song. But upon inquiry, he found the substance of it to be this:—that in such a place, naming the very spot, a man of gigantic stature lay buried; and that over his breast and back were plates of pure gold, and on his fingers large rings of gold. The place was so exactly described, that two persons there present were tempted to go in quest of the golden prize, which the harper's song had pointed out to them. After they had dug for some time, they found two thin pieces of gold."*

In this manner the grave of Arthur was discovered,

* In Camden's Britannica (1695) his lordship gives engravings of these pieces. In a manner somewhat similar, Mr. O'Flanagan, with the concurrence of the Royal Irish Academy, discovered an interest-

which circumstance is "enshrined" in Dr. Warton's glowing lines. And Dr. Johnson* witnessed the shame of the Mac Donalds of Glengay being brought to light in a similar manner.

Sir William Temple tells us, that about this period (the close of the sixteenth century), each Irish noble entertained in his family a *poet or bard*, a *tale-teller* or *dreshear-tach*,† like the *conteours* of the French. He says, that "the great men of their septs, among the many officers of their family, which continued always in the same races, had not only a physician and other officers, but also a *poet* and a tale-teller. The first recorded and sung the actions of their ancestors, and entertained the company at feasts; and the latter amused them with tales."

The severe shocks which were generally felt in Ireland during the reign of Elizabeth, tended to abolish the feudal system which had prevailed from earlier times; these sad strokes were again renewed with fatal effect by the gloomy regicide Cromwell, who, in his hatred of all the adherents to royalty, and his anti-religious, misguided zeal, laid the whole country desolate. His steps through Ireland were marked with fearful atrocities; as the ruined castles and desecrated temples, which there meet the eye, afford sufficient painful evidence. Society again felt these reiterated shocks by the presence of William the Third. In these latter cases, the Irish chieftains and

ing monumental stone, with the Druid's epitaph written in the Ogham character.

* Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland.

† Called by Sir John Davies "newstellers," from *dres*, news.

nobility fought, with proverbial attachment, for the cause of royalty, and were in consequence despoiled of their hereditary lands. The pride of the lordly chieftain was thus humbled; his property passed into other hands for imputed disloyalty; and other national princes, whose noble natures could not brook such distressing events, sought by self-banishment that freedom and honour in foreign lands, which were unhappily denied them in their own.* These painful events tended to extinguish the latent ray of the "light of song," in those halls in which the voice of sweet melody was wont to resound, as the hearts of the guests beat responsively to the joyous accents of the native harp; and in which magnificence had once held its feudal sway—now there reigned in them

"A death-like silence and a dread repose;"

to the voice of minstrelsy succeeded the lugubrious shrieks of the moping owl; and to the vibrations of the trembling chords, the air is alone disturbed by the wing of the drowsy bat.

Such was the desire of the Irish for music, notwithstanding the harsh measures of Elizabeth, that at the period of the Revolution—little more than a century after her reign—when lists were made of the effects or property of the proscribed adherents of the "coward" James the Second, it was found that nearly all, even the Anglo-Norman families of the Pale, possessed "one Irishe harpe."

* The self-exiled O'Neills, the O'Donnells, and other distinguished chiefs.

These social changes were fraught with sad effects to the bards, who being still strongly attached to their respective chieftains, shared in their fallen fortunes; but these still continued to hold out to those votaries of the muses, the hand of encouraging patronage. Those lands and endowments which had been the gifts of former national monarchs, and were intended to support the bardic order, and which had hitherto escaped confiscation to some extent, were now forfeited, together with those estates of their patrons, of which they in some instances formed a part. Thus, as the greater portion of the land fell into the possession of individuals, from whom the bards derived little sympathy, but rather a contrary feeling, these minstrels were reduced from their once independent position, and with the penal statutes of the former reigns in operation against them, they were obliged to seek the hospitality of the humbler classes; and thus they travelled from one house to the next "friendly door," with their harps slung on their backs; and they were usually received with that warmth of cordial feeling, with the "*Cead mille failte,*" which the Irish peasant always affords to the "child of song," agreeably to the cherished usages of past times.*

We cannot, without some degree of regret, see these men, once so influential, the cherished guests of the great, the first professors and admired votaries of that

* The descendants of these hereditary bards became distinguished, both at home and on the Continent, for their scholastic acquirements; Ex-Archbishop O'Maolconaire or Conroy, O'Higgin, Archbishop of Tuam, O'Daly, M'Firbiss. See "Irish Writers, Seventeenth Century."—M'Gee. Duffy, Dublin, 1846.

beautiful and tuneful art, thus reduced from their former exalted position, by the continued application of those severe measures, by which they are at length brought down to their now humbled condition. To the musician, who is interested in the progress of the science, it will be a subject of regret, as he may observe that the development of the art has been retarded by the degradation of men whose lives were devoted to its cultivation; and those who were distinguished as being amongst the foremost in the march towards excellence in the practice of that art, were thus obliged to cede that proud privilege from those unhappy causes.

While the condition of the bard became thus so sadly altered, we need hardly be surprised that the cultivation of the harp should become neglected; so we find that the practice of that instrument began to retrograde, and its rapid declension may be said to keep pace with the fall of the bards. On this subject, the ingenious Scottish writer, M'Donald, in a preface to some Highland airs, remarks, that "harp music was once the favourite music in the Highlands of Scotland, as it had long continued to be in Ireland. The fate, however, which it experienced in the two countries, has been very different. In Ireland, the harpers, the original composers, and the chief depositaries of that music, have, till lately, been uniformly cherished and supported by the nobility and gentry. They endeavoured to out-do one another in playing the airs that were most esteemed, with correctness, and with their proper expression; such of them as were men of abilities, attempted to adorn them with graces and variations, or to produce what were called good sets of them.

These were communicated to their successors, and by them transmitted with additions. By these means the pieces were preserved; and so long as they continued in the hands of the native harpers, we may suppose that they were gradually improved, as whatever graces and variations they added to them were consistent with, and tending to heighten and display the genuine spirit and expression of the music. The taste for that style of performance seems now, however, to be fast declining. The native harpers are not much encouraged. A number of their airs have come into the hands of foreign musicians, who have attempted to fashion them according to the model of modern music."

Here we at once perceive the effects of those illiberal measures, as applied to the bards, and causing the decline of that artistic skill of which they were formerly so celebrated—"*sic transit gloria Cytharæ.*"

It may not be uninteresting to give a biographical sketch of some of those sons of Apollo who flourished about this period. I give their names rather agreeably to the order of date, than to that of respective merit.

CHAPTER XIX.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF SOME OF THE IRISH HARPERS OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

CORMAC COMMON—to whom the words of Beattie might be justly applied, that

"Song was his favourite and first pursuit,"

was, perhaps, the last of that class of minstrels called the *Fin-sgealaighthe* or tale-tellers (like the *Conteours* of the French), and as described by Sir William Temple. Cormac (Dall, blind or *dark*, as the popular and poetic expression is) was born in May, 1703, at Woodstock, near Ballindangan, county of Mayo. His parents were simple and honest. Small-pox deprived him of his sight in his first year; which, with the humble means of his parents, precluded him from receiving the advantages of education. He, however, evinced a strong desire for information; and showing an early talent for music, a neighbouring gentleman procured him the necessary facilities, and Cormac took lessons on the harp, which he studied *con amore;* but unhappily his patron died, when the harp dropped from Cormac's hand, and it was not again resumed.

But poetry was the muse he most wooed. His mind became stored with the Irish songs and metrical tales, which he had heard sung and recited around the "crackling faggots" of the peasant's hearth, so that in due time she became a *Conteour*. "He left no calling for the idle trade," as our English Montaigne observes of Pope.* He now recites, in the hospitable halls of the squires, those Irish tales, some of which Mac Pherson has so artfully interwoven with his poems, and which he does Oisin the honour to attribute to him. "Endowed with a sweet voice and a good ear, his narrations were generally graced with the charms of melody." As to the manner of this species of entertainment, Mr. Ousley (of Limerick) says, that "In rehearsing any of Oisin's poems, or any other composition in verse, he chants them pretty much in the manner of our cathedral service."† He also composed a few airs, some of which are not without beauty. Cormac has long since gone to "the narrow house"—he has paid Nature's debt.

As a specimen of his poetry, I extract a few stanzas from an elegy by him, on the death of John Burke, Esq., of Carrentryle, and translated from the original Irish, by the talented Miss Brooke:‡—

That gentleman is described as having been

* * * * * *

"The learned and eloquent in honour's cause;
Of soul enlightened, and of fame unstained;
The friend of justice—to expound the laws,
Or yield the palm by song or science gain'd.

* Historical Rhapsody on Pope.

† Quoted from Walker's Memoirs. ‡ Reliques of Irish Poetry.

"Sublime his soul!—yet gentle was his heart;
His rural sports—his gay convivial hour
Avow'd each elegant, each social art;
Each manly grace, and each attractive power.

"Eternal pleasure fill'd his social hall;
And sweetest music charmed with magic sound;
Science and song obey'd his friendly call,
And varied joys still danc'd their endless round."

Rory Dall O'Cahan.—The "Rory Dall Morison," of Scottish celebrity, deserves notice on account of his talent. He was descended from the O'Cahans, who were in earlier times chieftains in the north of Ireland; tradition still holds the name cherished about Antrim and Derry. He travelled to Scotland shortly before the accession of James the Sixth of that country to the throne of England; and he seems to have travelled thither in company with noble personages.*

Having called at Eglintoun Castle, it appears that the fair lady of the castle, not being aware of his rank, offended his pride by demanding a tune in a peremptory tone. O'Cahan declined the honour, and left the castle. Her ladyship having learned who he was, sought a reconciliation, which was readily effected, and which gave occasion to his appropriate composition of "*Da mihi manum,*" (give me your hand,) known in Ireland as "*Tabhair dom lamh.*" The fame of this melody, and the name of O'Cahan, reaching the ears of the king, that monarch

* Gunn's Essay.

sent for the accomplished bard, who so delighted the king and his court, that the former familiarly placed his hand upon the bard's shoulder while complimenting him.

I shall merely further remark, that Sir Walter Scott, usually employing facts to illustrate his tales, introduces the name of Rory Dall as "the most famous harper of the Western Highlands," in his legend of Montrose, and whom he makes the musical preceptor of Annot Lyle. His harp and silver tuning-key are at the house where he died in Scotland.

Some of his other compositions may be found in Bunting's valuable collection of Irish harp music.

Miles Reilly, of Killincarra, county of Cavan, born about 1635, was an eminent harper. To him the harpers of the Belfast Assembly referred, as being the composer of the original charming air, "Lochaber." This melody was supposed to have been carried to Scotland by another bard, Thomas O'Connallon, born five years later, in Sligo; and who was by O'Neill called "the great harper," and who also states that he attained civic honours in Edinburgh, where he died.

The following lines are taken from an ode in his praise, which has been preserved by Hardiman:*—

"Enchanter, I say,
For thy magical skill
Can soothe every sorrow
And heal every ill;
Who hear thee, they praise thee,
And weep while they praise;
For charmer, thou stealest
Thy strain from the fays."

* Irish Minstrelsy.

O'Connallan was the composer of many of our finest airs; and his brother William composed some pieces of merit, of which "Molly Mac Alpine" is distinguished by Moore's elegant and spirited lines, "Remember the glory of Brian the brave."

Murphy (of Leinster), one of the cotemporaries of Carolan, has been spoken of by O'Neill, as being the best harpist of that period; having travelled into France, he performed before and with the approbation of Louis le Grand. The fine melody of "Lord Mayo" has been ascribed to him; but it is supposed by Mr. O'Conor to have been written at an earlier period, by David Murphy (of Connaught), who was retained by the nobleman, whose resentment the melody was intended to propitiate.

Cornelius Lyons, harpist to the Earl of Antrim, was the friend of Carolan, and also his rival in the musical art, even as to composition. His variations for the harp to the airs, "Ellen a Roon," "The Coulin," and others, afford testimony of his taste and ability. Being a man of easy manners, and conversational talent, Lord Antrim availed himself of his society. O'Neill tells, with *gusto*, the following adventure:—

Our harper and his patron being in London on one occasion, went to the house of Heffernan, a famous Irish harper, whose hotel was much frequented by the gentry; and it was previously agreed that his lordship was to call the bard "cousin Burke," while the latter was to call his noble friend either "cousin Randall," or "my lord," as he pleased. Having regaled themselves, they

sent for Heffernan, who by this time was aware of the dignity of his guest, from the conversation and livery of his lordship's servants. Heffernan complied with the wish of his noble guest, and played many of his best pieces in good style; when his lordship requested "cousin Burke" to try an air on the harp. The supposed cousin, after some apologies, took the instrument, and performed some melodies with such effect, that Heffernan, on hearing him, exclaimed, "My lord, you may call him 'cousin Burke,' or what cousin you please, but, *dar dich*, he plays upon Lyons' fingers." We are told that Heffernan had never met Lyons before. It is hardly necessary to add, that the minstrels indulged in their "flow of soul" for some hours, in a manner worthy of the "bards of old."

TURLOUGH O'CAROLAN.—Dr. Oliver Goldsmith says that "of all the bards this country ever produced, the last and the greatest was Carolan the Blind. He was at once a poet, a musician, a composer, and sung his own verses to his harp."* He was born in A.D. 1670, in the village of Nobber, county of Westmeath, on the same lands which had been "wrested from his ancestors." His parents were humble and honest, and the homely cottage where our bard was born, continues to be an object of interest to the inquisitive traveller. He was deprived of sight at an early age; thus was "knowledge at one entrance quite shut out," before he had taken

* Essays. At the time he wrote, there was no illustrious exception such as we have at present.

even a glance at the great book of Nature; so that our bard might say with Milton:—

> "———— Thee I revisit safe,
> And feel thy sov'reign vital lamp; but thou
> Revisit'st not these eyes, that roll in vain
> To find thy piercing ray, and find no dawn;
> So thick a drop serene hath quench'd their orbs,
> Or dim suffusion veil'd. Yet not the more
> Cease I to wander where the muses meet."*

Although to our bard

> "Morn was dark as night,"

yet he felt not the least uneasiness. "My eyes," he gaily used to remark, "are transplanted into my ears."

His taste for music becoming manifest, he was instructed in the practice of the harp; but genius and diligence are rarely united, yet his harp was seldom unstrung; and his fingers often "wandered amongst the strings in quest of the sweets of melody."

When Carolan grew to manhood, his harp was, like Anacreon's lute, attuned to the warm breathings of love; and although it did not "enter at the eyes," yet it took equal possession of his feelings. His devotion was not rewarded by the hand of the fair Bridget Cruise, still it is imagined that her heart was not denied him. And the charming song which bears her name may be considered one of his finest airs. Dr. O'Conor, who had

* Paradise Lost, Book iii.

often heard Carolan sing this ode, "thought the stanzas wild and enthusiastic."

The same learned gentleman gives us an extraordinary instance of the effect of the bard's passion for this lady. He went on a pilgrimage to St. Patrick's Purgatory, a cave in the island of Lough Dearg, Donegal. On returning to the shore, he met several pilgrims awaiting the arrival of the boat that had conveyed him. On assisting these devout travellers to get on board, he chanced to take a lady's hand, and instantly exclaimed "this is the hand of Bridget Cruise." His sense of feeling did not deceive him: it was the hand of her who was once the object of his aspirations. Mr. O'Conor heard the relation from the bard's own lips, in terms which, he remarks, "gave me a strong impression of the emotions he felt on meeting the object of his early affections."

This event is recorded in the agreeable lines of the accomplished Mr. Lover:*—

"'True love can ne'er forget
Fondly as first we met;
Dearest I love thee yet,
My darling one.'

"Thus sang the minstrel gay,
His wild impassion'd lay,
Down by the mountain's spray,
At close of eve.

* An agreeable poet, musician, and painter of the Emerald Isle. Many of his songs are full of national sentiment, and his literary works are exceedingly interesting, being descriptive of Irish habits, local scenery, and other matters.

Our bard being about this time

"Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita,"

or in what Byron would call the middle age, he consoled himself for the loss of Miss Cruise, by the hand of Miss Maguire, a lady of good family in Fermanagh. He built a neat little house in the county of Leitrim, in which his friends were hospitably received. It appears that he lived more merrily than wisely, and left "care for the morrow," which sometimes occasioned domestic embarrassments.

We are not informed as to the exact time or cause of Carolan's commencing his career as an itinerant musician: whether he "n'eut abord d'antre Apollon que le besoin"*—whether it was necessity or a love of music† which induced him to adopt that mode of profession. However, without further dwelling on this question, we can fancy our bard mounted on a good horse, and attended by a harper in the character of a servant. Wherever he goes, the gates of the mansions of the nobility and gentry are thrown open to him. Like the Demodocus of Homer, he is received with respect, and a distinguished place assigned him at the table: near him is his harper, ready to accompany his voice. Ritson considers him the genuine representative of the ancient bard.

* Mem. Hist. sur la Chanson, par M. de Querlon.

† It would seem to be the latter, as Dr. O'Conor tells us, that Carolan "kept a good pair of horses, and a servant to wait on him."

He now seems to realise the picture of the "wandering bard," so gracefully sketched by our elegant national poet:—

"What life like that of the bard can be—
The wandering bard, who roams as free
As the mountain lark that o'er him sings,
And, like that lark, a music brings
Within him, where'er he comes or goes—
A fount that for ever flows?
The world's to him like some play-ground—
Where fairies dance their moonlight round;
If dimm'd the turf where late they trod,
The elves but seek some greener sod;
So, when less bright his scene of glee,
To another away flies he!" MOORE.

It was during these peregrinations, that Carolan composed most of those airs which continue to afford delight; and he seldom failed to pay the tribute of a song, for the kindness and respect shown to him; thus, as Goldsmith remarks, "his songs in general may be compared to those of Pindar, as they have frequently the same flights of imagination, and are composed (I don't say written, for he could not write) merely to flatter some man of fortune upon some excellence of the same kind." Thus, like Pindar's, one is praised for his hospitality, another for the beauty, or the good qualities of his family, and the like. His playful song of

"O'Rourke's noble feast will ne'er be forgot,
By those who were there—or those who were not,"

is generally known as being translated by the witty Dean Swift; but it by no means takes the first place amongst our bard's numerous compositions.

The convivial song, "A bumper, Squire Jones," is one of his most playful *planxties*—the words to which have been paraphrased by the talented Baron Dawson;* and Carolan's brilliant effusions are lost in the splendour of the facetious baron's imitation. I am induced to quote a stanza or two of this jovial *jeu d'esprit*—

"Ye good fellows all,
Who love to be told, where there's claret good store,
Attend to the call
Of one who's ne'er frighted
But greatly delighted
With six bottles more;
Be sure you don't pass
The good house, Moneyglass,*
Which the jolly red god so peculiarly owns;
'Twill well suit your humour,
For what would you wish more,
Than mirth, with good claret, and bumpers, Squire Jones.

"Ye poets who write
And brag of your drinking fam'd Helicon's brook,
Though all you get by't
Is dinner ofttimes
In reward of your rhymes
With Humphry the duke;
Learn Bacchus to follow
And quit your Apollo,
Forsake all the Muses, those senseless old crones;
Our jingling of glasses
Your rhyming surpasses,
When crown'd with good claret, and bumpers, Squire Jones."

Wit and beauty were always sure to inspire our bard. These were so truly united in Miss Grace Nugent, that he

* Exchequer of Ireland, temp. Queen Anne.
† The residence of —— Jones, Esq.

exercised his imaginative powers to do them justice; and a song in her praise, from which I extract some verses, was composed by Carolan, to do homage to her charms:

"With delight I will sing of the maid
Who in beauty and wit doth excel;
My Gracey, the fairest shall lead,
And from beauties shall bear off the belle.
* * * * *

"Her neck to the swan's I'll compare,
Her face to the brightness of day;
And is he not blest who shall share
In the beauties her bosom display?
* * * * *

"'Tis thus the fair maid I commend,
Whose words are than music more sweet;
No bliss can on woman attend,
But with thee, dearest Gracey, we meet."*

Carolan "possessed an astonishing memory, and a facetious turn of thinking, which gave his entertainers infinite satisfaction."† In illustration of his power of memory, and his facility to create new melody, I quote the following on the authority of "*The Monthly Review :*"‡—

"At the house of an Irish nobleman, where Geminiani was present, Carolan challenged that eminent composer to a trial of skill. The musician played over on his violin the fifth concerto of Vivaldi. It was instantly

* This translation is from Walker's Memoirs. The fair subject of these lines was sister to the late John Nugent, Esq., of Castle-Nugent, Culambre.

† Goldsmith's Essay on Carolan.

‡ Vol. lxxvii., Old Series.

repeated by Carolan on his harp, although he had never heard it before. The surprise of the company was increased, when he asserted that he would compose a concerto himself at the moment; and the more so when he actually played that admirable piece, known ever since as "Carolan's Concerto." Dr. Goldsmith says, that "for spirit and elegance" it may be compared "with the finest compositions of Italy."

Our "Irish Orpheus" was inordinately fond of "Irish wine," as Pierre le Grand used to call the whiskey; but it is remarked that he seldom used it to excess; and that he only imbibed that spirit from the feeling that it was not ungrateful to the muse. Carolan was not the only bard who drew inspiration from that generous source; for "there have been several planets in the poetical hemisphere, that seldom shone but when illuminated by the rays of rosy wine." It is said that the amiable Addison's wit sparkled most when his pulse beat quick; and the goblet always "flows with wines unmixt" for Demodocus (whom Homer makes to represent himself), before he tunes his "vocal lay;" and according to Horace, we learn that

> "When Homer sings the joys of wine, 'tis plain
> Great Homer was not of a sober strain;
> And father Ennius 'till with drinking fir'd,
> Was never to the martial song inspired."*

Carolan, by the advice of his physician, abstained from the *usquebaugh;* and he is described under this severe regimen, as wandering like a *Réveur*, with

* Book i., Epistle 9.

dejected spirits. However, after the lapse of about six weeks, he was passing a house in the town of Boyle, and was tempted to enter. He asked for a measure of his favourite liquor, in order merely to regale his sense by the smell of his much-loved beverage; but no sooner did the fumes ascend to his brain, than the latent spark was kindled, and with "the ramblings of a genius which Sterne would have pursued with raptures of delight,"* he with brightened countenance poured forth the effusions of a heart newly animated. At length, at the risk of his health, he tasted the forbidden cup, and composed on the occasion the admired song known as "Carolan's (or sometimes Stafford's) receipt." To a portion of this melody Moore's pathetic lines, "Oh, breathe not his name" are applied.

The following lines from "Carolan's Receipt," may afford some idea of the composition:—

"When by sickness or sorrow assail'd,
To the mansion of Stafford† I hied;
His advice and his cordial ne'er fail'd
To relieve me—nor e'er was denied.

"With the spirit of whiskey inspir'd,
By my harp e'en the power is confess'd—
'Tis then that my genius is fir'd—
'Tis then I sing sweetest and best."

Amongst the numerous anecdotes related of Carolan,

* Letter to Mr. Walker.

† The bard's amiable medical friend, whose son in 1785 was principal of a college in Paris.

I select one given by Dr. Kitto, (F.S.A.,) in his volume on the "Lost Senses,"* as being illustrative of Carolan's musical abilities :—

"The fame of our bard having reached the ears of an eminent Italian artist in Dublin, the latter devised a plan for putting his skill to the test. He selected an elegant piece of music in the Italian style, but here and there he altered or mutilated it so that none but 'a real judge' could detect the alterations. Carolan, quite unaware that it was intended as a test of his skill, gave due attention to the performer who played in his presence the altered piece. He then declared it to be an excellent piece of music, but to the astonishment and satisfaction of the company, added humorously, "but here and there it limps and stumbles." He was requested to rectify the errors, which he accordingly did; and in this state it was sent back to Dublin, and when the Italian artist saw the amendments, he cordially pronounced Carolan to be 'a true musical genius.'"

Carolan spoke his native Celtic language elegantly, but in latter years he had learned the English tongue.

He died in 1738, in the 68th year of his age, and was interred in the parish church of Kilronan, Ardagh, (Westmeath,) where his skull (like that of the celebrated Grace O'Malley, of Clare Island) was preserved in a niche. Carolan was universally lamented, and he died not unsung, as Mac Cabe poured forth the elegiac strain in honour of his mortal remains.

It may not be here misplaced to quote the observa-

* Knight's Weekly Volume.

tions of a writer in the year 1784,* who says—"It has been acknowledged by every nation in Europe, that music was cultivated in Ireland, when melody was scarcely known in other countries. Music must have been its most distinguishing characteristic, when it took up the harp as the conspicuous figure in its arms. Lord Kames is positive that those airs, called the old Scots' tunes, were originally Irish compositions, which James the First (who was himself a fine musician) had adapted to the Church Service. Pope calls Ireland 'the mother of sweet singers.' Carolan, though a modern minstrel, has been admired as a first-rate musical genius—an untaught phenomenon in the cultivation of harmony."

The learned Dr. O'Conor has, with his usual elegance and energy, drawn a sketch of Carolan's character, from which I make, with pleasure, a few quotations :—

"The imagination of our bard, 'ever on the wing,' was eccentric in its poetic flights; yet, as far as that faculty can be employed in the harmonic art, it was steady and collected. In the variety of his musical numbers, he knew how to make a selection, and seldom was contented with mediocrity. So happy, so elevated was he in some of his compositions, that he excited the wonder, and obtained the approbation of a great master, who never saw him, I mean *Geminiani*. He outstripped his predecessors in the three species of composition in use among the Irish. He was enraptured with Corelli's music: he was constitutionally devout, and composed some church music. Gay by nature, and cheerful from

* Magee's Weekly Packet, June, 1784.

habit, his talents and morality procured him esteem and friends every where."

In conclusion, I now present the reader with some remarks from the classic pen of Mr. Moore, on the subject of Carolan's melodies:*—

"The plaintive melodies of Carolan take us back to the times in which he lived, when our poor countrymen were driven to worship their God in caves, or to quit for ever the land of their birth—like the bird that abandons the nest which human touch has violated. In many of these mournful songs, we seem to hear the last farewell of the exile, mingling regrets for the ties which he leaves at home, with the sanguine hopes of high honours that await him abroad."†

Speaking of our national melodies, this same elegant writer observes, "the while profiting by the improvement of the moderns, our style keeps its original character sacred from their refinements; and though Carolan, it appears, had frequent opportunities of hearing the works of Geminiani, and other great masters, we but rarely find him sacrificing his native simplicity to any ambition of their ornaments, or affectation of their science. In that curious composition, indeed, called his Concerto, it is evident that he laboured to imitate Corelli; and this union of manners, so very dissimilar, produces the same kind of uneasy sensation which is felt at a mixture of different styles of architecture. In

* Preface to the Third Number, Irish Melodies.

† Such honours as were won at Fontenoy, and which extorted from George the Second the memorable exclamation, "Cursed be the laws which deprive me of such subjects!"

general, however, the artless flow of our music has preserved itself free from all tinge of foreign innovation."

Perhaps Carolan could not have selected at that period a better model, in the more elevated Italian style, than Corelli; and the gravity and expression of his slow movements, together with the flowing grace of his '*giga*,' are exhibited to some extent in the melodies and the joyous *planxties* of Carolan. But national melodies are beyond the influences of the mutations of style in music; the former must retain their native characteristics, regardless of innovations, except so far as these are founded on correct taste, which also serves to direct the proper expression of national melody.

Denis A. Hampsey, or Hempson, was another interesting model of the old school of Irish harpists. He was born shortly after Carolan, in 1695. His antiquarian taste led him to prefer those venerable strains of Ireland, which had long survived the memory of their composers. Bunting informs us that he had an admirable method of playing *legato* (bound or smooth), and the *staccato* (divided or marked), in which he could run through rapid divisions in an astonishing style. Hempson's system of harp-playing, which may he regarded as the model of the antique style of the Irish harpist, comprised as extensive a range of effects "as has ever been devised by the most modern improvers."

The following notice of this bard is taken from a letter of the Rev. G. Sampson (historian of Londonderry), and published by Miss Owenson, now Lady Morgan, in her admired novel, "The Wild Irish Girl."

His father possessed the whole townland of Tyrcrevan. The bard was born in Craigmore, Londonderry; and at the age of three years he lost his sight by the small-pox. At twelve he was taught the harp by Bridget O'Cahan, for, as he said, "in these old times women as well as men were taught the Irish harp in the best families, and every old Irish family had harps in plenty." Afterwards he had lessons from Garragher, L. Fanning, and Patrick Connor, from Connaught, which was, he said, "the best part of the kingdom for Irish harpers and for music."

He travelled through Ireland and Scotland for about ten years. During these peregrinations many amusing incidents lighted up his path. He was about fifty years of age when he made a second tour to Scotland, in 1745. At Edinburgh he performed before Charles the Pretender: the tune called for was "The king shall enjoy his own again."

———"I hope to see the day
When the whigs shall run away,
And the king shall enjoy his own again."

Hempson was introduced to the Pretender's presence by Sir Thomas Sheridan and Colonel Kelly of Roscommon. Hempson was kindly and considerately received by most of the principal families in Ireland. These and other interesting anecdotes were related to the narrator, when the venerable bard had attained the age of 108 years; and having known him when he himself was a boy, he called to see him in 1806, two years before the minstrel's death. The wen at the back of his head was

much increased, so that he was called "the man with two heads."

"General Hart, who is an admirer of music, sent a painter to take a drawing of him, which cannot fail to be interesting, if it were only for the venerable expression of his meagre blind countenance, and symmetry of his tall, thin, but not debilitated person. I found him lying on his back in bed, near the fire of his cabin; his family employed in the usual way; his harp under the bed-clothes, by which his face was covered also. When he heard my name, he started up (being already dressed), and seemed rejoiced to hear the sound of my voice, which, he said, he began to recollect. He asked for my children, whom I had brought to see him, and he felt them over and over; then with tones of great affection, he blessed his God that he had *seen* four generations of the name, and ended by giving the children his blessing. He turned to the old time-beaten harp, his solace and bedfellow, and played with astonishing justness and good taste.

"The tunes which he played were his favourites; and he, with an elegance of manner, said at the same time, 'I remember you have a fondness for music, and the tunes you used to ask for I have not forgotten;' which were 'The Coolin,' 'The Dawning of the Day,' 'Ellen a Roon,' 'Cean Dubh Dilis,' &c. These, except the third, were the first tunes which, according to the regulation, he played at the famous meeting of harpers at Belfast, under the patronage of some amateurs of Irish music. Mr. Bunting, the celebrated musician of that town, was here in 1793 (the year after the meeting), at

Hempson's, noting his tunes, and his manner of playing, which is in the best old style. He said with the honest feeling of self-love, 'when I played the old tunes, not another of the harpers would play after me.'"

Having learned that his friend and benefactor, the Rev. Sir H. Harvey Bruce, had come to visit him, he desired to be raised up in bed, and the harp placed in his hands. Having struck some notes of a favourite strain, he sunk back unable to proceed, taking his last adieu of an instrument which had been his companion and hourly solace, during a long life.

He died in 1807, aged 112 years. "The last of our bards now sleeps cold in the grave," was the cry which arose when his death was announced.

Jerome Duigenan, a Leitrim harper, born A.D. 1710, of whom many extraordinary anecdotes are told.

O'Neill says, that he was "an excellent Greek and Latin scholar, and a charming performer on the harp;" and then tells the rather amusing anecdote of his having been summoned up to Dublin by his patron Colonel Jones (parliamentary representative of Leitrim), to compete with a Welsh harper, then in the *suite* of an English nobleman. Duigenan was instructed to wear his "*Cauthack*," or ancient dress, and "*barred*" cap of the same material, of conical shape; so attired, and being a tall handsome man, he looked very well. Some of the parliamentary members hearing of the intended trial of skill, requested that it would take place in the *House of Commons*, which it accordingly did, previous to the commencement of the usual business. The

amusing scene closed by a unanimous decision in favour of Duigenan, who gained the laurel.

Dominic Mungan was a "famous" performer on the harp. He was born in 1715, in that poetical county, Tyrone, and was blind from his birth. Of his three sons, the youngest, a scholar of promising excellence, died in early life; the second was an eminent physician in Monaghan; and the third attained to the distinguished position of dean of Ardagh, and finally that of bishop of Limerick, in the Established Church. Dominic, amongst his other good qualities, is described as being an excellent performer. His "*piano*" passages, or "whisperings," were exquisitely contrasted with the swelling full harmonies by which he produced striking effects. He was quite conversant with the music of the best masters: the *adagios*, and other select movements from Corelli, Handel, and Geminiani, were his especial favourites. He seemed to prefer Handel's vocal airs: "Let me wander not unseen," he played charmingly. He enjoyed distinguished reputation in the north of Ireland.

Echlin (Ackland) Kane, a celebrated harpist and pupil of Lyons, was born at Drogheda, A.D. 1720. He visited Rome, where he played before "the Pretender;" was received with respect at Madrid, and was presented to his Catholic majesty, who intended to induce him to remain; and in compliment of his countrymen, of whom many distinguished personages then resided there, Kane visited France also; but some indiscretions marred his prospects. He returned to Ireland, but remained chiefly

in Scotland. Lord Macdonald (about 1775) presented him with a silver harp tuning-key, which had been left to this family by the harpist's great predecessor, Rory Dall.

Mr. Gunn says, that "he was often spoken of by Manini, at Cambridge, with rapture, as being able, though blind, to play with accuracy and great effect, the fine treble and bass parts of many of Corelli's corcertos, in concert with other music." It is observed, that had he been more steady in conduct, he might have raised the character of the wandering minstrel to a high position.

Hugh O'Neill was, like his pupil and friend Arthur, one of the better class of society. He was born in Foxford (Mayo), of highly-respectable parents: his mother (of the Macdonnell family), was cousin to the famous Count Taaffe. O'Neill having lost his sight at the early age of seven years, he devoted himself to the study of music as an accomplishment; but in after years, some unexpected reverses of fortune induced him to adopt it as a profession. From the respectability of his family, and the propriety of his deportment, he was received more as a friend and associate, than as a professional visitor, amongst the gentry of Connaught.

Through the munificence of Mr. Tenisson, of Castle Tenisson (county Roscommon), he possessed a large farm at a nominal rent. We are told that, blind though he was, he used to go out regularly with hounds, which, in an open grazing country like Roscommon, he might do with comparatively little risk.

He was taken off by fever, while yet a young man, and was buried in Carolan's grave.

Arthur O'Neill, so celebrated and often named in these pages, was born at Drumsnalad, county of Tyrone, in A.D. 1734. An accident unhappily deprived him of sight when only two years old. He then devoted his attention to music, and Owen Keenan, the Orpheus and blind Romeo of Killymoon, was his preceptor on the harp. By the time he had attained his nineteenth year, he had made a tour through the four provinces, and had visited the principal families in the land. In 1807, on the formation of the Belfast Harp Society, he was unanimously elected the resident master of that interesting institution. His memoirs, written by himself, abound with curious and interesting matter. From his frequent visits to the well-known Charles O'Connor, of Belanagar (Roscommon), our harpist acquired such a knowledge of Irish history as afforded him much gratification, and of which he prided himself not a little.

He is described as being an interesting and pleasant companion, full of anecdote, and played backgammon and other games with dexterity. He was justly proud of high descent; and the *hand* of the O'Neills was engraved on his coat buttons, which were of silver, of half-crown size. On the decline of the Harp Society, O'Neill retired to his native county, where he continued to receive an annual stipend from a few amateurs of national music at Belfast, until his death, which took place near Dungannon, in 1818, in his eighty-fifth year.

Of this interesting class of minstrels, many names

present themselves at about this period; for the biographical sketches of whom, we are much indebted to the industrious pen of Mr. Bunting, whose name is so much associated with these venerable "bards of other days."

We have seen from the preceding brief biographical sketches of these votaries of Apollo, that most of them cultivated the art, while labouring under the disadvantages resulting from the loss of sight, by which they would be considerably debarred the more frequent access to the harmonic treasures of the great masters. But we usually find that bounteous Nature, as if to supply the defect of one sense, kindly increases the perceptive powers of the others; and we not unfrequently observe, that from the loss of sight the ear becomes more acute, the touch more sensitive, and the retentive powers of the mind more comprehensive—the faculty of memory especially. As an illustration, I may quote the instance given by Dr. Kitto, of the diversified talents of

William Talbot, celebrated for his skill on the Irish pipes. He was born near Roscrea, in Tipperary, A.D. 1781, and lost his sight from small-pox at four years of age. His family going to reside at the sea-side, near Waterford, he evinced a taste for mechanics, as exhibited in the construction of miniature water-mills, wind-mills, and in fitting up small ships, "with every rope and appendage" as those on a large scale. He also amused himself with other children, by the use of kites, tops, hoops, and the like.

At the age of thirteen he had obtained much local celebrity for his performance on the Irish pipes, so that his practice was soon very extensive in attending all

festive parties. It appears also that angling was amongst his favourite pursuits. At seventeen, Talbot became acquainted with a captain in the navy, who eventually induced him to go with him to sea. During four years he visited various parts of the world, and was every where received with civility and attention; and we are informed by Dr. Kitto, that he became so well accustomed to the vessel, that he was often seen going from rope to rope to the mast-head, "with all the skill and agility of an experienced seaman." Tiring of the sea, he became a landsman in 1803, and at Limerick made his first attempt to build an organ, in which "he succeeded admirably, without instruction from any person." Removing to Cork, he purchased an organ, so as to become acquainted with the beautiful mechanism of this queen of instruments; his knowledge of which was soon evinced by the construction of a fine-toned organ. The ideas thus acquired, led him to deepen and improve the scale of his former favourite instrument, the Irish pipes, to which he added many important alterations. By the exercise of his varied talents, he acquired deserved esteem, and educated a respectable family.

I may now close this part of the subject, by quoting some interesting "Observations on Blindness," by Mr. Bew, as given in the memoirs of the "*Literary and Philosophical Society of Manchester*," a work which contains many curious and elegant essays:—

"Music," observes Mr. Bew, "almost without exception, appears to be the favourite amusement of the blind. There is no other employment of the mind—religious contemplated excepted—that seems so well

adapted to soothe the soul and dissipate the melancholy ideas which, it may naturally be expected, will sometimes pervade the dispositions of those who are utterly bereft of sight. This, together with the beneficial influence which results from the practice of this delightful art, by quickening and perfecting the sense of hearing, is a matter that deserves the most serious attention."

CHAPTER XX.

EIGHTEENTH CENTURY.

About the time of the accession of George I., Handel made London his residence. While yet the Italian opera was in its infant state in England, a taste for Italian music was extending itself amongst the fashionable circles. Italian artists, both vocal and instrumental, were brought from Italy at a considerable expense, and yet the operatic scenes were oddly enough performed—one part sung by the Italian vocalist, in his native euphonious language, while the other portion of the dialogue was given in English. Handel conducted the opera, and a taste for that species of music became generally diffused. "Italian music began its reign with despotic sway in that great city."*

The spreading influence of this fashionable *furore* reached our Hibernian shores, and our native beautiful melodies—these charming but familiar favourites—for a time gave place to Italian music; and they were suffered, like some neglected flowers, to "waste their

* Spectator.

sweetness," while the more favoured exotic was cherished by the fashionable amateur of that day.

Marmontel has remarked, that "le gout se rectifie á measure que l'art l'eclaire en lui presentant d'age en age, pour objets de comparison, des modeles plus accomplis:" "the taste becomes rectified in proportion as art enlightens it, by presenting to it from time to time more accomplished models, as objects of comparison." This elegant and just remark is applicable, as regards those models of severe and classical harmony, which must be sought elsewhere than in the operatic music, not then modelled by the genius of Mozart. But there is another species of false refinement, which tends to remove the heart from the ear,* which should ever be closely connected, as we find much of our modern music is calculated to display the artistic dexterity of the performer, while the higher object is lost sight of—thereby only producing some tintillations of the organ of hearing, without touching the heart. I may regret, in the language of a learned ecclesiastic, "that this wonderful charm of melody, properly so called, together with the whole merit of expression, should be sacrificed, as we frequently find, to the proud but poor affectation of mere trick and execution; that, instead of rendering the various combinations of sound a powerful instrument in touching the heart, exciting agreeable emotions, or allaying uneasy sensations, as in the days of old, it should be degraded into an idle amusement, devoid of dignity, devoid of meaning, absolutely devoid of any one

* Du Bos.

ingredient that can inspire delightful ideas, or engage unaffected applause."* It is gratifying, however, to observe symptoms of a return of that pure and elevated taste, to guide our more accomplished musicians to those classical models of true taste.

In the operatic circles the great German had an inferior though powerful rival in the person of Buononcini; each was sustained, and their respective merits supported by distinct parties; feuds became so high in the musical circles, as to occasion the sarcastic lines of Swift, the talented dean of St. Patrick's, Dublin:—

"Some say that Signor Buononcini,
Compared to Handel's a mere ninny;
While others say that to him, Handel
Is hardly fit to hold a candle.
Strange that such difference should be
'Twixt tweedle-dum and tweedle-dee."

The sublime oratorio of the "*Messiah*" was first performed at the Covent Garden Theatre, in 1741; and so coldly was it received, that the offended great artist determined to try its effects on the more susceptible feelings of a Dublin auditory, and to obtain their unbiassed opinion of its merits. He accordingly departed for Dublin, a circumstance to which Pope alludes in his well-known lines in the "*Dunciad*." The Genius of the Italian opera thus expresses her apprehensions, and instructs *Dullness*:—

"Strong in new arms, lo! giant Handel stands,
Like old Briareus, with his hundred hands;

* Fordoyce's Sermons to Young Women.

To stir, to rouse, to shake the soul he comes,
And Jove's own thunder follows Mars's drums.
Arrest him, goddess! or you sleep no more;
She heard, and drove him to th' Hibernian shore."

The Messiah was performed in Dublin on the 27th of March, 1742. Dr. Burney says, that this was the first time it was ever performed; but this is an error, as the contrary of the learned doctor's assertion is shown by the original score in Handel's own handwriting, in the Royal Library, and which score has been examined, and on which the composer has noted the date of its being finished (12th September), and that it was performed on the 14th September of the same year, 1741.*

Dr. Busby and other writers agree in stating, that the Oratorio was first performed in London; and after noticing the unfavourable reception it had there, the learned Doctor says, that "in Ireland it was heard with admiration," and "the whole was hailed as a wonderful effort of the harmonic art." "Taught by the better criticism of the sister kingdom," England, "at his (Handel's) return, discovered the excellence to which she was before so unaccountably blind."

It was performed in Dublin in aid of the funds of the City Prison, and it laid the foundation of the great master's fame, based on the affections of the people. He was assisted by Mathew Dubourg, as leader, whose skill as a violinist is still the theme of many a panegyric.†

* Mr. Perry thinks, however (owing to some doubts as to the correct reading of those notes), that the *Messiah* was first performed in Dublin.—*Mr. Surman's Edition.*

† Dubourg was pupil of Geminiani; Sir John Hawkins says, that "his style was bold and rapid," while that of his master Geminiani

"Music was now quite *in furore*, a musical enthusiasm was excited, the melting strains of the Italian artists were now eagerly sought, vocalists were invited over, and our fair dames," observes Mr. Walker, "learned to expire at the opera. In the education of the youth of both sexes, a knowledge of some musical instrument was deemed an accomplishment indispensably necessary. Concerts were the favourite amusements in the houses of the nobility and gentry, and musical societies were formed in all the great towns in the kingdom. In a word, every knee was bowed to Saint Cecilia."

In 1740, the Anacreontic Society was founded, and of which His Grace the Duke of Leinster continues to be president. The vice-presidents are the Earl of Arran, Earl of Donoughmore, Lord Clonbrock, and other noblemen. The orchestra is composed of some of these dignified amateurs, and most of the distinguished musical professors in Dublin.*

The concerts of this society are of a high character, and the best compositions of the great masters are there cultivated *con amore*. Its meetings are held at the Rotunda, or circular room, adjoining the Lying-in

was "tender and pathetic." The latter was in 1728 offered the post of "Master and Composer of State Music in Ireland," but he declined, as it could not be held by a Catholic; it was conferred upon Dubourg, the musical preceptor to the Prince of Wales. He also performed the duties of leader of the King's Band, 1752; these as *pluralist* he retained until his death, at London, 1767. While Dubourg resided in Dublin, he was visited by his friend Geminiani, in 1761, where the latter died in 1762, aged eighty-three.

* Among whom I had the pleasure to be formerly associated.

Hospital, in which concerts are given twice a week during the summer season, for the benefit of the charity. Prior to the erection of this beautiful room, concerts were given for the same purpose in the long room, Granby-row, and were conducted by Castrucci, the pupil of the celebrated Corelli, who had been invited to Ireland by Dr. Moss. Castrucci died in 1752, in Dublin; the greatest respect was paid to his remains, which were interred in St. Mary's churchyard.

In 1753, the hospital for incurables in Townsend-street "rose, as it were, by the power of music." It was built by the subscriptions to concerts at that time, and was supported by the Philharmonic Society.

At this harmonious period, the musical glasses, since improved into the harmonica, were invented by Richard Pockrich, Esq., a name, which as Dr. Campbell observes, "ought not to be lost to the lovers of harmony." He once so charmed two bailiffs with the magic tones of this little instrument, that they were incapable of executing the duties of their office on his person. Having by imprudence outlived the possession of a good estate in Monaghan, to which he was born, he became warmly attached to music.

In 1755 he published his "Miscellaneous Works," consisting of songs and poems. About 1760 he unhappily perished in an accidental fire at Cornhill, London.

Garret, First Earl of Mornington, whose name has become so distinguished, was born in Ireland about the year 1720, and succeeded his father Richard Colly Wellesley in 1758, and became Viscount Wellesley and Earl of Mornington in 1760. The Hon. Daines

Barrington, in his *Miscellanies* (1781), informs us, that this nobleman affords an instance of early attention to musical instruments. "His father played well for a gentleman, on the violin, which always delighted the child while in the nurse's arms, and long before he could speak. Nor did this proceed from a love, common to all children, of a sprightly noise, as may appear by the following proof. Dubourg, who was thirty years ago (i. e. in 1751) a distinguished performer on that instrument, happened to be at the family seat; but the child would not permit him to take the violin from his father, until his little hands were held.

"After having heard Dubourg, however, the case was altered, and there was much more difficulty to persuade him to let Dubourg give the instrument back to his father. Nor would the infant ever afterwards permit the father to play while Dubourg was in the house." At about nine years he could play, and shortly after we find him taking a second violin part in Corelli's Sonatas. At fourteen he studied the harpsichord; and hearing his father express his intention to have an organ in his chapel, the young amateur set to work to qualify himself for the office of organist, so that in less than a year and a half, he sat down and played an *extempore fugue*, which astonished his auditors. His lordship was soon so distinguished in music, that the Dublin University conferred on him the degree of Doctor of Music, and he was nominated to the professor's chair of that faculty, in the University.*

* Extract from the "*Musical Library Supplement.*"

His lordship died in 1781, and was succeeded by Richard, the Marquis of Wellesley.

The *Harmonicon* observes, that Lord Mornington "devoted all his leisure hours to music, and such was the success attending his favourite pursuit, that small indeed is the number of professors who, by their works, have arrived at the same rank in the art, as that so fairly gained and so incontestably possessed by the noble earl." Each succeeding age joins in the praise which his genius has called forth.

Lord Mornington's compositions are chiefly vocal; some for the church, but he most excelled in glee writing. "Here in Cool Grot" gained the prize medal given by the Catch-Club in 1779. And amongst others, "O Bird of Eve," for five voices, "is a piece of vocal harmony of transcendant beauty."

Michael Kelly, the son of a wine merchant of Dublin, was born 1762; at an early age he showed a marked talent for music—he was placed under the best professors in Dublin. Rauzzini, his vocal master, prevailed on Kelly's father to send him to Naples for further instruction, where he arrived in his sixteenth year.

He was patronised by the British minister, Sir William Hamilton. His master, Avrile, recommended him to Campigili, the manager of the Pergola Theatre in Florence, a kind of agent for the Italian Operas through Europe.

At Leghorn, he met Signora and Signor Storace, through whom he was introduced to the British consul.

He gave a concert, which produced profit and applause.

At Florence, Kelly's reception was most flattering; his *debùt* was in "Il Francèse in Italia, ("the Frenchman in Italy,") "he was the first British male singer who had ever sung in Italy."

While here he received an offer of engagement from Lindley, father-in-law to Sheridan, and with him joint-patentee of Drury-lane Theatre. Kelly was to be retained for five years, but Kelly's father prevented the compact. Subsequently Kelly performed with great success at most of the Italian theatres, as first-tenor; he travelled through Germany, and contracted a close intimacy with the celebrated Mozart, while in Vienna. At this city his reception was most gratifying; he was complimented by the Emperor Joseph the Second. At this period the court at Vienna was, perhaps, the most brilliant in Europe; and the theatre, which forms part of the royal palace, was crowded with the *èlite* of society, all fond of, and acquainted with music. Kelly moved in the highest circles, and was every where wel received. While there Kelly spent three days visiting Haydn, at the palace of Prince Esterhazy. Mozart conferred on Kelly what this vocalist deemed a high compliment from such a great master. Kelly had written a melody to Metastasio's Canzonetta—"Grazie agl' ingani tuori," which became a great favourite. Mozart was pleased with it, and wrote some very beautiful variations to the melody.

Owing to the illness of his mother, and at the wish

of his father, Kelly obtained leave from the Emperor to re-visit Dublin. His majesty graciously ordered Kelly to take leave of absence for twelve months, adding, that his salary should continue in the interim, and also granting permission to accept advantageous engagements in London at his pleasure. Kelly having visited Dublin, did not return to the Continent, but settled in London; where he made his first appearance in Drury-lane, in the opera of "Lionel and Clarissa," and retained his position as first tenor, and as director of the musical performances, till his final retirement from the stage. As a composer Mr. Kelly became first known in London by the appearance of a "Friend in Need," written by Prince Hoare, the music of which he produced in 1797, and which met with universal approbation. At subsequent periods he wrote the music for Lewis's "Castle Spectre," also for "Adelmorn the Outlaw," the "Wood Demon," "Venoni," and "Adalgitha." Kelly wrote a song for George the Fourth, by command; the words were supplied by Lewis.

"Blue Beard," written by Colman, was set to music by Kelly, and which produced large sums of money to the theatrical funds.

"The Feudal Times" was not so successful as the former. In 1799 Sheridan's celebrated play of Pizzaro was produced, the music composed by Kelly. Kelly, accompanied by Madame Catalani, again visited Dublin in August, 1808; and having also performed at Cork and Limerick, they returned to London in September; and on the 24th February, 1809, Drury-lane

Theatre was destroyed by fire. His scores were unhappily then consumed.

In October, Mr. Arnold "brought out" "the Jubilee," at the Lyceum—the music by Kelly; it was successful. In 1811, Kelly wrote the musical drama "Gustavus Vasa," for Covent Garden.

The musical drama, "the Peasant Boy," he wrote for the Lyceum—and a Ballet for the Opera House—and the historical play of "the Royal Oak" for the Haymarket. In Autumn, Kelly fulfilled engagements in Dublin; and in September, 1811, he made his last appearance on that stage, where, as a boy, he appeared in 1779.

Shortly before his death, which took place at Margate, on the 15th October, 1826, he published his "Reminiscences," an amusing work, in two volumes, replete with anecdotes of his friends and cotemporaries.

Thomas Carter was "a native of that country, which has always excelled in the tender and beautiful, both in lyric poetry and in melody—Ireland; the land of verdure and genius, of oppression and suffering, but on which a better prospect is at length beginning to dawn." * Mr. Carter was patronised by the Earl of Inchiquin, through whom Carter's musical education was completed at Naples, where he was very kindly received by the British minister, Sir William Hamilton. He afterwards went to Calcutta, where he was at the

* Musical Library, May, 1835.

head of all musical matters. The climate forbade his stay, and he came to London, where he died in 1804.

He wrote the expressive and charming music of "O! Nanny, wilt thou gang wi' me?" The verses are from the elegant pen of Thomas Percy, D.D., Bishop of Dromore, "the tenderness, simplicity, and beauty" of which, "would alone be sufficient to transmit to posterity the name of the author."

The appearance (in 1765) of his "*Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*," formed an era in British literature. This gifted prelate died in 1811.

Important political events in Ireland marked the advent of the nineteenth century; the unhappy mode adopted by politicians, of attaining those objects, shook the state to its centre; the elements being thus thrown into disorder, tended very much to impede the onward progress of the art; we have had to deplore similar effects at anterior dates; but now, it is gratifying to think, that

> ——— "While peace is singing
> Her halcyon notes o'er land and sea,"

we may hope to find the tuneful muse re-assume her mild reign; and we may once more hear the song of gladness resound through the land, and that our people will again hear with delight the joyous "*Planxty*" to solace their cares, or the rural lay of the husbandman, as with the melodious "whistle" he soothes his toiling steeds.

Having brought the subject of our remarks so near the present time, it may not be, perhaps, necessary to

dwell more on it, than to make a few observations on the efforts which have been made to revive the cultivation of the national instrument in Ireland, and to stimulate the latent taste for these native melodies which had for a time given place to those of the Italian school. This portion of the subject shall be briefly sketched in the succeeding pages.

CHAPTER XXI.

EFFORTS TO REVIVE THE PRACTICE OF THE HARP.

HAVING endeavoured to trace in these pages the degree of estimation in which that beautiful instrument, poetically designated the "queen of song," was held from earlier times, and having adverted to the honourable distinctions which its professors received, we have also had to record its sad "decline and fall," also into disuse. It now remains to point out those efforts which have been made, with a view to rescue its sweet voice from oblivion. This laudable desire to call it once more into practice, was evinced at a time when as yet many of that still cherished class, the professors of it, like Carolan, yet remained to transmit the forms of those "strains of other days," and who were deservedly respected for their attainments on the harp.

Of this interesting class, Arthur O'Neill was the worthy representative. He was to a considerable extent a kind of repository of the artistic and traditional system of harp performance, which has descended from earlier days.

He has been described by his pupil Dr. M'Donnell, of Belfast, in 1838, to have been "a man of strong natural

sense, pleasing in his manners, and had acquired a considerable share of information on common topics, so that he could acquit himself very well in a mixed society, when encouraged to converse."* This gentleman further observes, that "the harpers frequented mostly the houses of the old Irish families, who had lost their titles, or were reduced more or less in their estates." When these minstrels appeared, it was the signal for festivity among the young and old. O'Neill was an excellent companion, "a man of veracity and integrity."

From the laudable desire to promote the cultivation of our national music, to rescue the harp from impending disuse, and to revive its practice, and being also humanely anxious to elevate the condition of the few remaining bards, Mr. James Dungan, a munificent Irish gentleman residing at Copenhagen, conceived the idea of holding annual music meetings or festivals, at which, skill in the composition and performance of native melodies should be encouraged by liberal premiums; the whole *fète* to conclude with a brilliant ball, to be attended by the gentry of the surrounding district, who would, as was reasonably supposed, interest themselves in these national and interesting musical contests.

Having remitted funds sufficient for this purpose, with something of the liberal spirit of earlier days, he succeeded, though not in the country himself, in having the first assembly for the above interesting object to

* Letter to Mr. Bunting of Belfast.

take place in his native town of Granard, county of Longford, A.D. 1781. Only seven harpers were present. O'Neill tells us, that Charles Fanning obtained the first premium of ten guineas for his performance of the "Coolin;" O'Neill himself received the second prize of eight guineas for the "Green Woods of Truagh;" and Rose Mooney received the third award of five guineas for "Planxty Burke."

The ball, at which about 500 persons were present, concluded these interesting festivities.

The second meeting and ball held in the following year, were much better attended; additional candidates presented themselves, and as the excellent originator of these meetings was present himself, it was the most brilliantly attended of all. It appears, however, that unfortunately some ill-timed jealousies having been observed by the originator, he was disheartened, and did not attempt to revive these interesting re-unions.

A third meeting was held, at which Lord and Lady Longford, with most of the gentry of that district, were present.* At the ball there were about a thousand persons, and liberal presents were made to those harpers who had been unsuccessful at the contest, so that all were delighted with the results.

These meetings awakened the latent enthusiastic feeling for the cultivation of this species of music, which former prevalent feeling extended its influence northwards, so that we find other liberal efforts were made about ten years afterwards, by the gentlemen of Belfast

* O'Neill to Mr. Bunting.

and its vicinity. Thus in 1791, Dr. M'Donnell and other gentlemen, imitating the patriotic spirit of Mr. Dungan, issued a circular, from which I make a few extracts.

They proposed to open a subscription, to be applied in an attempt to "revive and perpetuate the *ancient music and poetry of Ireland.* They are solicitous to preserve from oblivion the few fragments which have been permitted to remain as monuments of the refined taste and genius of their ancestors."

For this purpose it appeared obviously necessary "to assemble the *harpers,* those descendants of our ancient bards, who are at present (1791) almost exclusively possessed of all that remains of the music, poetry, and oral traditions of Ireland."

Prizes were to be awarded, and a person well versed in the language and antiquities of the nation should attend, and also an accomplished musician, "to transcribe and arrange the most interesting portions of their knowledge."

Such an undertaking, it was thought, would meet the approbation of men of taste and refinement; "and when it is considered how intimately the *spirit* and *character* of a *people* are connected with their *national poetry and music,* it is presumed, that the Irish patriot and politician will not deem it an object unworthy of his patronage and support."

There were found only ten harpers to respond to this call—a sad proof of the declining state of that once flourishing art, and which also pointed out the necessity of rescuing from oblivion, by reducing to notation,

those national musical relics, of which they were the venerable repositories.

To the judgment and talent of Mr. Bunting, of Belfast, this interesting duty was assigned, and with what amount of fidelity he has discharged his duties, may be best estimated by his valuable published collections of Irish music. He says, that while being engaged in this interesting office, "he first imbibed that passion for Irish melody, which has never ceased to animate him since."

The meeting was held in the large room of the Exchange, Belfast, on the 11th, 12th, and 13th of July, 1792. As already observed, ten harpers attended,* amongst whom was Williams, a Welsh harper, and the marked difference in the character of the two national instruments was striking; the bold and martial tones of the Cambrian harp contrasting with the sweet and more expressive tones of the Irish harp.

The premiums were awarded, to Fanning ten guineas, to Arthur O'Neill eight guineas, and six to each of the others.

The meeting was attended by the principal nobility and gentry of the district, and the funds were raised by the sale of half-guinea tickets to the performances.

In reference to the state of our music at about this period, and also in allusion to the services of Mr. Bunting in preserving our ancient airs, Mr. Moore, speaking of "the touching language of my country's music," which he afterwards so elegantly interpreted

* Of whom only two were living in 1809.

by his charming verses, thus observes—"there can be no doubt, that to the zeal and industry of Mr. Bunting, his country is indebted for the preservation of her old national airs. During the prevalence of the penal code, the music of Ireland was made to share in the fate of its people. Both were alike shut out from the pale of civilised life, and seldom anywhere but in the huts of the proscribed race, could the sweet voice of the songs of other days be heard. Even of that class, the itinerant harpers, among whom for a long period our ancient music had been kept alive, there remained but few to continue the precious tradition; and a great music-meeting held at Belfast in 1792, at which the two or three still remaining of the old race of wandering harpers assisted, exhibited the last public effort made by the lovers of Irish music, to preserve to their country the only grace or ornament left her out of the wreck of all her liberties and hopes. Thus, what the fierce legislature of the Pale had endeavoured vainly through so many centuries to effect—the utter extinction of Ireland's minstrelsy—the deadly pressure of the penal laws had nearly, at the close of the eighteenth century, accomplished; and but for the zeal and intelligent research of Mr. Bunting at that crisis, the greater part of our musical treasure would probably have been lost to the world. It was in the year 1796 that this gentleman published his first volume, and the national spirit and hope then awakened in Ireland, by the rapid spread of democratic principles throughout Europe, could not but insure a most cordial reception for such a work, flattering as it was to the fond dreams of Erin's early days,

and contained in itself, indeed, remarkable testimony to the truth of her claims to an early date of civilisation." *

In 1807, a third effort was made to revive the cultivation of the harp, by the formation of the *Belfast Irish Harp Society*, instituted for the maintenance of a principal professor, or teacher of the harp, and for the musical education of a number of boys of about ten years of age, selected from amongst the blind and indigent; these boys were educated and lodged with due care. The society was governed by a managing committee. The subscribers varied from one hundred to one hundred and twenty in number; the expenditure during the six years of its existence was £950. It ceased its operations in 1813. Arthur O'Neill was the resident professor, with accommodations and £30 a year.

An Irish Harp Society was formed in Dublin prior to this time, which did not succeed, although liberal sums were subscribed for its support.

In 1819 a fourth effort was made to revive the practice of the national instrument, and this was strangely enough made by residents in India. At the head of this Iberno-musical Society in India, was our illustrious countryman the late Marquis of Hastings, the Governor-General in India, and a liberal contributor to the funds; also the Marquis of Downshire, the Marquis of Donegal, and the Earl of Belfast, were honorary members residing in Ireland.

* Preface to vol. iv.

Another warm admirer of our national music in those distant climes, was the late king of *Oude*. This potentate was fond of the Irish harp music, and was anxious to obtain from Ireland some artists; but at this time his wish could not be complied with, as these professors were now few indeed.

The contributors in India (amongst whom I may name, besides the Marquis of Hastings, General Sir William Casement, Sir Francis M'Naghten, Major Charles Kennedy, and his brothers) were generally natives of Ireland, and by whom remittances were made to an amount exceeding £1100. Under these favourable circumstances the school flourished for some time under the superintendence of Rainey (nephew to the Scotch poet, Robert Burns), who was educated by O'Neill in the former school. But since his death, the affairs of the society have been declining, as would appear by a letter from the secretary in 1839.

We have observed that the charms of native melody may for a time be forgotten, while fashion sways, to some extent, the inclination, in preferring the exotic sweetness of those flowers of Italian song; yet, this temporary estrangement of the taste has tended to add a higher charm to the returning zest for the beauties of our native airs, which excite those higher emotions of which they seem to be such true exponents. And although the harp has fallen into regretted partial disuse, yet the "soul of music" once gone forth amongst the people, it lives for ever, fondly cherished in their hearts, in which it always finds a ready response—its

undying spirit is traditionally handed down to after ages, and is preserved as some loved object, round which our cherished recollection of home, or of childhood, still clings with most tender feeling. Such is a national music, realizing the beautiful idea of our great poet—

"When thro' life unblest we rove,
Losing all that made life dear;
Should some notes we used to love,
In days of childhood meet our ear;
Oh! how welcome breathes the strain!
Waking thoughts that long have slept;
Kindling former smiles again
In faded eyes that long have wept."

I am inclined to think, that when we shall have cultivated our taste (agreeably to the suggestion of Marmontel, already quoted) with those more elegant models in the melodial art, we shall revert, with a higher degree of appreciation, to the simple and original beauties of those national strains.

This observation is strengthened by the fact, that most of the distinguished continental composers of the past and present centuries* have made those melodies the principal themes of many of their more elegant compositions, so that the touching sweetness of these airs is not less appreciated in other countries by the men of the most cultivated taste, than they are under their native sky. Beethoven, the great master of the

* Moscelles, Dr. Spohr, Czerney, and others.

harmonic science, threw around some of those exiled melodial figures, those fanciful touches which distinguish the pencil of the consummate artist. Haydn arranged a collection of Scotch melodies for Mr. Thompson of Edinburgh, amongst which many of these Irish melodies found a place. These were to have been succeeded by a similar collection of Irish airs, arranged by the same master; but on the lamented death of this "father of orchestral music," in 1809, the work was put into the hands of Beethoven, by whom, it is hardly necessary to say, they were admirably arranged. The collection of Irish melodies arranged by this great master appeared in 1816, in two volumes.*

But the poetry to which the melodies were applied in this collection, was not at all the echo of Irish national sentiment, it was not the true exponent of the music, and the poetry in many instances suggested a different train of thought than that which was associated with the music. However, through the zeal and talent of Mr. Bunting of Belfast, collections of our music were made, with more national poetry, chiefly contributed by the

* He had many of these beautiful melodies hung around his room. Haydn also collected continental national melodies. The importance which he attached to melody, or air in composition, may be observed from his remarks which follow—and which are in accordance with his fondness for national melody:—"Melody, or air," he observes, "is the soul of music—it is the life, the spirit, the essence of a composition. Without this, Tartini may find out the most singular and learned chords—but nothing is heard but a laboured sound; which, though it may not offend the ear, leaves the head empty, and the heart cold."†

† Lettres sur Haydn—by Bombet. 1808.

talented Dean Swift, Miss Owenson (Lady Morgan), Miss Brooke, Baron Dawson, and others. But the want of a more general collection of the Irish melodies was felt, and it was soon happily supplied through the genius of Moore, whose exquisite poetry to those beautiful melodies is so expressive of a national feeling; Irish historic incidents, allusions to local scenery, to popular fanciful traditions, and other national traits, are beautifully combined in those charming lyrics, which are expressed in the most harmonious numbers. Such a work realized the national desire for a collection of our melodies.*

* Other collections of Irish music were published about this time, and prior to *the* "Irish Melodies," *par excellence*, of Moore; amongst those I may name a "periodical collection of old Irish melodies" (with poetry) by Holden; also, the "Irish Minstrel" was "a selection of original melodies of Erin, with characteristic words by Ed. Fitzsimons, Esq., and symphonies and accompaniments by Mr. J. Smith." I may also observe that, in 1840, Mr. Bunting published his last interesting work on Irish music. Amongst our periodical literary works I may name the "*Citizen*," commenced about 1839; and which contains some valuable antiquarian and musical matter, as associated with some antique specimens of our music therein published. In 1845, Mr. Horncastle published a "collection" of our melodies; in the preface to which he says, that "many of the old authors, from the tenth to the sixteenth century, speak in the highest terms of the *Music of Ireland;* and as it is well known that the ancient melodies of a country serve as illustrations of the civilization, temperament, and character of the people, we must conclude, independently of all other evidences, that the ancient Irish were a highly civilized people." This gentleman (of Her Majesty's chapel royal) further observes, that "their *caoines*, or funeral cries, alone serve as examples of the most beautiful harmonic compositions, and prove beyond a doubt that music in those early ages was in the highest state of cultivation." The *caoine* formed the prin-

Our elegant poet was assisted by Sir John Stevenson, in the musical arrangements of the work, who added to his distinguished attainments as musician, a high appreciation of these melodies.

To the combined talent of these gentlemen we are indebted for that magnificent collection of the music of Ireland, which is at once a record of her former skill in the language of sweet song, and of her refined feeling—a monument which will descend to, and be admired by other generations, as a happy union of elegant poetry married to those exquisite national strains.

The first number of the work appeared in 1807, from the preface of which we learn that "though the beauties of the national music in Ireland have been very generally felt and acknowledged, yet it has happened, through the want of appropriate English words, and the arrangements necessary to adapt them to the

cipal musical portion of the burial rites in early times, and we have little means of testing its effects, but when the pathetic melody of it is duly harmonized, the *ensemble* is effective and touching.

Some of the "hedge schoolmasters" of Ireland adapted the whole of Horace's Latin Odes to those ancient Irish melodies. To the melody "*Tà me mo Chodladh*," "I am asleep," the first Ode was applied thus:—

"Mæcenas atavis edite regibus
Tà me mo Choladh," &c.

The serio-comic song of "Barney Brallaghan" is also paraphrased, the first stanza of which thus begins:—

"Erat turbida nox
Hora secunda mane," &c.

voice, that many of the most excellent compositions have hitherto remained in obscurity. It is therefore intended to form a collection of the best original Irish melodies, with characteristic symphonies and accompaniments; and with words containing, as frequently as possible, allusions to the manners and history of the country. Sir John Stevenson has very kindly consented to undertake the arrangement of the airs; and the lovers of simple national music may rest secure, that in such tasteful hands, the native charms of the original melody will not be sacrified to the ostentation of science."

The degree of zeal with which Mr. Moore commenced the work may be estimated by the following extract from his letter to Sir John Stevenson:—

"I feel anxious that a work of this kind should be undertaken. We have too long neglected the only talent for which our English neighbours ever deigned to allow us any credit. Our national music has never been properly collected;* and while the composers of the continent have enriched their operas and sonatas with melodies borrowed from Ireland—very often without even the honesty of acknowledgment—we have left the treasures, in a great degree, unclaimed and fugitive. Thus our airs, like too many of our countrymen, have, for want of protection at home, passed into the service of foreigners. But we are come, I hope, to a better period of both politics and music; and how much they are connected, in Ireland at least, appears too plainly in

* The writer excepts Mr. Bunting's valuable collection.

the tone of sorrow and depression which characterizes most of our early songs. The task which you propose to me, of adapting words to the airs, is by no means easy. The poet who would follow the various sentiment which they express, must feel and understand that rapid fluctuation of spirits, that unaccountable mixture of gloom and levity which composes the character of my countrymen, and has deeply tinged their music. Even in their liveliest strains, we find some melancholy note intrude—some minor third or flat seventh—which throws its shade as it passes, and makes even mirth interesting. If Burns had been an Irishman (and I would willingly give up all our claims upon Ossian for him), his heart would have been proud of such music, and his genius would have made it immortal."

But the modest aspirations of our poet have been realized by his own elegant lyrics. The expression of national sentiment which pervaded the poetry of these melodies was such, that it attracted the notice of the government of that period, who, it was reported, were about to interfere with the further publication of the work; this would be indeed worse than a revival of the penal enactments of Henry VIII. against the minstrels.

The social circle in which our distinguished poet moved was formed of men of refined talent—even the most exalted personages in the state desired his presence: thus courted by men of genius for his mental acquirements, his productions were esteemed and sought for; so that when these exquisite lyrics, accompanied by those beautiful and expressive native melodies, appeared,

they at once found their way into the saloons of the great, and into those circles where a higher taste was cultivated; and while they afforded delight or excited the more elevated sentiments, they prepared the way, to a great extent, for the removal of those political disabilities under which the poet's native land had been so long labouring. Such are the soothing and humanizing effects of a national poetry and music; they fill the heart with higher emotions, and imperceptibly change our more stern natures. I need hardly observe that these melodies were received in Ireland, accompanied by Mr. Moore's charming poetry, with the highest delight—with the warm glow of enthusiasm to find that the latent poetic spirit again exercised its cheering influences over the Irish mind, so susceptible of its charms.

The Irish melodies are known, and their beauty admired by continental nations; for music is a species of language of sentiment, which, being universal in its effects, requires no interpreter to point out its charms, as the heart at once is touched with its magic influence. These lyrics have been translated into the different languages of Europe;* they have also appeared in the Latin, under the title of *Cantus Hibernici.*—(*Nich. Lee Torre.*)

From the appearance of this collection we may date the revival of Irish song; the melodies, married to the

* They have been also translated into the Antique Gælic, by the Most Reverend Archbishop of Tuam, a learned prelate distinguished for his philological taste.

classic verses of Moore, will descend to after ages, and will be admired so long as the language of sentiment is understood. I am induced to quote here his beautiful lines which refer to this remark :—

"Dear harp of my country! in darkness I found thee,
The cold chain of silence had hung o'er thee long;
When proudly, my own island harp, I unbound thee,
And gave all thy chords to light, freedom, and song.

"The warm lay of love, and the light note of gladness
Have wakened thy fondest, thy liveliest thrill;
But so oft hast thou echo'd the deep sigh of sadness,
That even in thy mirth it will steal from thee still."

Some few of the songs were written with "a concealed political feeling." "When first I met thee warm and young," alluded to the Prince Regent's desertion of his political friends. Byron thus alludes to the great success of this song, soon after Moore wrote it, among a large party staying at Chatsworth. Writing to Moore, he says—"I have heard from London that you have left Chatsworth, and all there full of 'entusymusy;' * * and in particular, that 'When first I met thee' has been quite overwhelming in its effects. I told you it was one of the best things you ever wrote, though that dog, * * * * wanted you to omit part of it."

The influence which these national melodies exercise over the hearts of our expatriated countrymen, who hear, in other distant climes,

"The wild song of their dear native plain,"

cannot, perhaps, be well described; but we may form some idea of the effects of those interesting reliques, from the incident given by Mr. Moore, as connected with the melody, "Love, wit, and valour," which incident, observes that elegant writer, "awakened feelings in me of proud but sad pleasure, to think that my songs had reached the hearts of the descendants of those great Irish families, who found themselves forced in the days of dark persecution, to seek in other lands a refuge from the shame and ruin of their own; those, whose story I have thus associated with one of their country's most characteristic airs:—

'Ye Blakes and O'Donnells, whose fathers resigned
The green hills of their youth, among strangers to find
That repose which at home they had sighed for in vain.'

"From a foreign lady of this ancient extraction—whose names, could I venture to mention them, would lend the incident an additional Irish charm—I received, about two years since, a large portfolio, adorned inside with a beautiful drawing, representing love, wit, and valour, as described in the song. In the border which surrounds the drawing, are introduced the favourite emblems of Erin, the harp, the shamrock, the mitred head of St. Patrick, together with scrolls containing each, inscribed in letters of gold, the name of some favourite melody of the fair artist."

This present was accompanied by a letter to our elegant poet from the fair Countess ———, couched in terms of merited eulogy—from which I cannot deny myself the pleasure of making a brief extract:—

"Vous dirai-je, monsieur, les doux moments que je dois á vos ouvrages? ce seroit rèpèter une fois de plus, ce que vous entendes tous les jours, et de tous les coins de la terre. Aussi, j'ai garde de ravir un tems trop precieux par l'echo de ces vieilles vérités."*

While Mr. Moore, our elegant poet, justly predicts that these melodies will descend to other ages, he modestly ascribes much of the beauty of these exquisite lyrics to the grace and pathos of "the sweet music" in which they are embalmed."†

In a clever article on the poetry of Robert Burns, which appeared in the *Dublin University Magazine*, the writer takes occasion to allude to the specimens of Irish native songs‡ and satire, of which there is an abundance, in which he says, that "certainly there is no want of fervid feeling, nor of musical or rhythmical perception." "We speak now of the native remains in the Irish language, but if we extend our observations to those beautiful and spirited effusions, in which the same mind has expressed itself in English, we perceive a great and most cheering difference. Probably no more just sequences of thought are to be found in the whole range

* "What shall I say, sir, of the sweet moments which I owe to your works? it would be to repeat once more, that which you daily hear from all parts of the earth. I am also careful not to occupy your too precious time by the echo of these known truths."

† The classic pencil of our countryman, Maclise, has elegantly designed pictorial illustrations of the Irish Melodies; this is indeed a beautiful work, as exhibiting the combined graces of Poetry, Music, and Painting.

‡ And the interesting "Ballad Poetry of Ireland," lately edited by C. G. Duffy, Esq.

of lyrical literature than in the melodies of Moore. No orator, with all the art of rhetoric, could build up a more perfect fabric of thought than the 'Harp of Tara.' In the compass of two stanzas it unites the demonstrative, the reflective, and the illustrative elegancies of rhetoric, and brings all home to the breast of the reader with a combination and completeness equal in its way to the peroration of a speech of Demosthenes." The literary excellence of these melodies is so universally acknowledged and felt, it is also quite unnecessary to make further remarks on the beauty of the music—the united effects move the heart and excite the highest emotions.

As already observed, Sir John Stevenson was the ingenious coadjutor to the poet, in arranging and writing the accompanying symphonies to the melodies; these he has accomplished very successfully, although at the period when these melodies appeared in their new and more elegant ornaments, some ventured to observe that the musician had interfered with the simplicity of the airs by the richness and variety of the harmonies; but it is not so: Haydn has sported through the mazes of the harmonic art in his arrangements of the Scottish melodies. But if disposed to be hypercritical, I might perhaps observe that Sir John has not exhibited in the arrangements of these melodies, a due amount of care in the application and disposition of those harmonic resources of which he was so skilful a master. He brought, however, an innate national feeling to the task, which could not well be expected from a stranger to this sentiment, however well educated in the art; and Mr.

Moore justly observes that "through many of his (Sir John's) own compositions we trace a vein of Irish sentiment, which points him out as peculiarly suited to catch the spirit of his country's music; and far from agreeing with those fastidious critics who think that his symphonies have nothing kindred with the airs they introduce, I would rather say that, on the contrary, they resemble in general those illuminated initials of old manuscripts, which are of the same character with the writing which follows, though more highly coloured and more curiously ornamented."*

Sir John Stevenson, whose name will descend to after ages, as being associated with the melodies of his native country, died, in his seventy-fourth year, on the 14th September, 1833, at the residence of his daughter, the Marchioness of Headford, county of Meath. From one of the public journals of that period I quote the following remarks occasioned by that melancholy event:—

"His genius as a composer was of the highest order: in his 'Irish Melodies' he may be said to have redeemed the character, and established the musical reputation of his native country; though indeed she seems to have merited this character in 'bygone times,' which was not denied her, as these same melodies are in themselves forcible evidences; but to after ages he has placed all their beauties and their effect on the mind before an admiring community, who cannot suppress the consideration that they who composed such strains were possessed of all the kinder feelings of nature, and (these melodies) are the

* Preparatory Letter III.

best criterions of the state of social civilization. But the best panegyric on their merits is, that they are as well known and appreciated in every civilized empire, as their fidelity is acknowledged and their heart-reaching pathos felt amongst the hills and vales where their nationality is felt."

His ecclesiastical compositions are full of elevated devotional feeling, and dignified expression. He long occupied the direction of the choir of Christ Church, Dublin. Sir Henry R. Bishop arranged the last Numbers, 9 and 10, with the supplement of the Melodies.

His lamented death is commemorated in the pathetic verses of "our great living poet," by whom they are "meant as a tribute of sincere friendship to the memory of an old and valued colleague in this work—Sir John Stevenson:—

"Silence is in our festal halls,
Sweet Son of Song! thy course is o'er;
In vain on thee sad Erin calls,
Her minstrel's voice responds no more.
All silent as th' Eolian shell
Sleeps at the close of some bright day,
When the sweet breeze that waked its swell,
At sunny morn, hath died away.

* * * * *

"But, where is now the cheerful day,
The social night, when by thy side
He, who now weaves this parting lay,
His skilless voice with thine allied;
And sung those songs whose every tone,
When Bard and Minstrel long have past,
Shall still, in sweetness all thine own,
Embalm'd by fame, undying last.

" Yes, Erin, thine alone the fame—
Or, if the Bard have shared the crown,
From thee the borrow'd glory came,
And at thy feet is now laid down.
Enough! if Freedom still inspire
His latest song, and still there be,
As evening closes round his lyre,
One ray upon its chords from thee."

CHAPTER XXII.

CONCLUDING REMARKS.

HAVING brought our observations on National Music so far, little further need be added; except, perhaps, I may venture to remark, that as our continental neighbours have ascribed to us the merit of an early familiarity with the effects of sweet song, and as the beautiful native charms of Ireland's melody are heard in agreeable contrast with the concerted music of other countries, should we not endeavour to regain something of that early artistic excellence for which our country was formerly remarkable, now that many of those uncongenial measures which retarded the development of the art have passed away?—And as the mental culture begins to extend its influence over Ireland with some faint resemblance to the former desire for literary and scientific acquirements for which our people were distinguished—should we not, as of old, include the cultivation of music in those studies, so as to acquire something of our former fame in the musical art? The ear of Erin is most sensitive of the charm of Music's voice; and from their buoyant temperament, our people are always most likely to cultivate it with success, when the proper facilities

are afforded. I need not speak of the powerful influence of music in calming the harsher elements of our nature: the history of all polite nations shows that attention was paid to its cultivation, so as to afford more rational pleasure. Should we not, as in early times, make it a necessary part of education, so as to refine and elevate our tastes? Professorships might be established in our principal colleges, with powers to grant, in cases of high merit, the reward of the doctor's gown, or other honorary distinction; we should thus, I apprehend, promote the progress of the art in all its more classical forms.

Nor should the ancient national *Clairseach* be forgotten; its sweet voice should be again heard, as an echo of former days; the practice of the native harp should be cultivated, in its improved form, with pedals to facilitate the harmonic changes, and other modulated effects. The harp was an especial favourite with Haydn, and there are few who will not be delighted with its soft tones. Its classic form now graces the saloons of the great, and when the fair performer touches the trembling strings, the eye and the imagination are charmed by the graceful group, while the ear is delighted with the delicious harmonies which flow from the vibrating chords, and win the heart.

The merits of this antique instrument are beyond any feeble advocacy of mine, its own sweet language is sufficient to attract our regard.

The important place which music occupies in the sacred offices of religious worship, renders it an object of our especial attention. Sublime music, as associated

with those venerable and pathetic canticles which have descended to us, has a most powerful influence over the human mind. The great masters in the harmonic science (like those of the other sister arts) have consecrated some of their greatest efforts to the production of those grave and effective ecclesiastical compositions which will descend to after ages as models of high art.

These works are now, I am glad to say, much cultivated in Ireland, and the accomplished *Maestro di Capello* will, doubtless, extend the study of them wherever the facilities present themselves.

Dr. Burney spoke of the influence which dignified ecclesiastical music exercises in improving the mind and the taste. I may also add, that while it is cultivated for the paramount purposes of Supreme worship, the immediate effect of hearing such elevated music frequently, is an improved taste for the art generally.

Our choirs (like so many small music-schools) should be centres from which a taste for music should radiate, and I wish, therefore, to invite the attention of all those who have it in their power to direct the mind in these matters, to see and afford every possible stimulus to the cultivation of ecclesiastical music, and obtain a more effective performance of this portion of the divine offices. Let our venerated ecclesiastics imitate the musical zeal of St. Columbanus, and we should soon have

> ——"Within the holy fane,
> When music wafts the soul to heaven,"

all those truly sublime effects which, when properly

applied, it is so well calculated to convey. Such an effort would be cordially responded to by the people, who are ever ready to cultivate choral music—facilities for which study are afforded by the increasing taste for music.

It also appears to me that the various local "temperance bands" in Ireland, if well conducted, are calculated to diffuse a taste for music. An especial object with the directors of such bands should be to procure a good style of music, with the best arrangement for the respective instruments, otherwise the natural taste becomes deteriorated. Good combined effects should be the principal feature in their performance, and are to be preferred to mere individual display, which, however brilliant, should be but sparingly indulged in: *unity* of effect is also desirable. Works on musical history and science might be occasionally read at these re-unions.

I should also suggest, that as there are still many of our antique national airs which are heard amongst the peasantry, and which have not as yet been put into notation with a view to their publication, those who have the opportunity of noting down such airs should do so, that ultimately a uniform and complete edition of all our vocal and instrumental melodies should be given.*

Selections from our national music should form part of our concerts; for we find that whenever an original melody of Erin is heard in such instances, it at once finds its way to the heart, not less effectively than the

* Should my avocations permit, I hope to devote some attention to such an object.

elegant melodies of other climes. While the Irish artist or amateur admires the "flowers of melody" of other countries, he should not entirely neglect the native beauties of his own; which, whether heard in the saloon or the concert room, seldom fail to charm.

By some such means as these, and with the patronizing care of our nobility and gentry, whose influence in the promotion of such an object would be paramount—the spirit of music would soon extend its soothing effects once more over our "land of song." Then might we hope to see the latent musical talent of her people developed—men more highly gifted would probably arise, and Erin might once more be at least equal to other nations, and not less distinguished for her devotion to the tuneful art than she has been in former days.

Besides those excellent institutions, the Anacreontic and the Philharmonic Societies, already alluded to, which exercise considerable influence in the cultivation of the musical taste in the Hibernian metropolis, we may name the "Ancient Concerts," a society in which the great choral works of the classical masters are effectively performed by an efficient and powerful orchestra, ably conducted by Mr. Joseph Robinson.

The Choral Society in Trinity College gives periodical concerts, directed also by this gentleman. These concerts are intended for the gratification of the members' friends.

There is also the "Orpheus" Society, well conducted; with some other musical clubs, to which I need not further allude.

It is to be hoped, that such of our cities and larger

towns as have not yet formed societies of this kind, will at once take steps in forming those social music schools, in which the skilful amateur may co-operate with the musical artist in those praiseworthy endeavours to illustrate the works of the great masters, and thus elevate the taste, while the sense is charmed.

That intellectual and classical species of chamber-music, the quartett and quintett for stringed instruments, is cultivated, *con amore*, by our more accomplished *artistes;* the amateurs of this charming species of composition owe much to the talent and exertions of Mr. Pigott (violoncellist), Mr. M'Intosh (violinist), and other gentlemen, who so well develope the beauties of this style of writing.* I may express a hope that classical concerts of this species will always be cherished and maintained.

Those agreeable and frequent re-unions of the more accomplished artists in the metropolis, at the residence of that amiable gentleman, and talented amateur, the late Mr. Dowel, contributed to bring those exquisite compositions for stringed instruments into more familiar practice, and to develope their melodial and harmonic forms with greater effect.† On many of those interesting occasions, Mr. Wallace, the accomplished author of the opera "*Maritana*," was pre-

* The writer was delighted to hear quartetts performed by Sivori and M'Intosh, *Violins*; Willy (of London), *Viola*, and Pigott, *Violincello*, during a visit to Dublin in 1843.

† The writer had the pleasure to take a part, formerly, in these private *soirèes*.

sent, and assisted to unbind the "hidden soul of harmony."

Prior to his voyage to the *Antipodes,* or to the New World, Mr. Wallace was distinguished as a performer on the piano-forte and the violin, and was leader of the concerts. Years have added to his mental acquirements.

Amongst the accomplished performers on the piano-forte, Mr. W. S. Conran is held in high estimation, for his cultivated taste, and brilliant execution on that instrument.

The state of the choirs of the metropolis may afford some index to the amount of cultivation bestowed on music generally.

In the Metropolitan Church (of the Conception), the grand and ornate ecclesiastical compositions of Beethoven, Mozart, Haydn, and other great masters, are effectively performed, conducted by Mr. Haydn Corri. Such works require a powerful chorus to give due effect to those beautiful compositions.

The service at St. Patrick's is "chanted in the true cathedral style, and is not to be surpassed, if indeed, equalled, by any similar establishment in this country."* "It acquired its repute during the palmy days of the late Dr. Spray, Weyman, Sir John Stevenson, &c.;" but though a few of the elder choristers yet remain, it does not maintain that high excellence which reached its acmé during the lives of the above-named gentlemen. We hope, however, that it will continue to cultivate those admirable anthems of the cathedral

* "Musical World," London, 1845.

writers of the sixteenth century, and we are delighted to learn that the Dean, the Hon. and Rev. Mr. Packenham, is determined that this choir shall be one of the most complete of its kind.

Should the observations which I have ventured to make, in the course of this essay, tend to promote, in some degree, the cultivation of music generally, and to direct attention to the subject under our especial consideration, namely, the "Music of Ireland," I shall feel flattered in the hope that my little exertions may not have been quite useless.

THE END.

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